

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

8 September 2015

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Maidstone Borough Local Plan: Transport Policies

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Steve Clarke, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Policy
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the officer responses to the representations submitted during public consultation on the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2014 for policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport), DM14 (Public Transport) and DM15 (Park and Ride), set out in Appendix One be approved.
2. That the officer responses to the representations submitted during public consultation on the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2014 for policies PKR1(1) (Linton Crossroads) and PKR1(2) (Old Sittingbourne Road) set out at Appendix Two be approved.
3. That the proposed changes to the supporting text (which include reference to the Leeds Langley Relief Road) and the criteria for policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport) and DM14 (Public Transport) set out at Appendix Four to the report be approved for Regulation 19 Consultation.
4. The proposed changes to Policy DM15 (Park and Ride) deleting reference to the park & ride sites at Linton Crossroads and Old Sittingbourne Road set out at Appendix Five to the report and the deletion of policy PKR1 and as consequence PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) as set out at paragraphs 4.21, 4.23 and at paragraphs 4.57 to 4.62 within the report be approved for further Regulation 18 Consultation.
5. That Officers be directed to continue the preparation of a revised draft Integrated Transport Strategy in conjunction with Kent County Council which reflects recommendation 3 and 4 above and that the completed draft should be reported for consideration to a subsequent meeting of this Committee and the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough - Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough is viewed by the public as the second highest desired outcome from the current strategic plan. This report deals with issues that are of importance in delivering the Council's desired outcomes.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	08 September 2015

Maidstone Borough Local Plan: Transport Policies

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the responses to the Regulation 18¹ public consultation on the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, which took place between 21 March and 7 May 2014, for policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport), DM14 (Public Transport and DM15 (Park and Ride) as well as PKR1 (1) (Linton Crossroads) and PKR1 (2) (Old Sittingbourne Road).
- 1.2 Consideration of policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 was deferred by Cabinet at their meeting on 14 January 2015 pending the completion and consideration of the outcomes of the VISUM strategic traffic modelling undertaken by Amey on behalf of Kent County Council (the Highway Authority), and the Council.
- 1.3 The results of the VISUM modelling have now been received and have been considered by officers and also reported to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (22 July 2015) and the meeting of this Committee held on 18 August 2015 adjourned to 19 August 2015.
- 1.4 The previously reported schedule of issues raised to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation draft and officer responses to policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 is attached at Appendix One.
- 1.5 A schedule of issues that were raised to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation draft and officer responses to policies PKR1 (1) and PKR1 (2), which have not previously been considered by Councillors, is attached at Appendix Two.
- 1.6 The report assesses whether any changes to Policies DM13, DM14, DM15, PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) and the supporting text should be made following consideration of the responses to the Regulation 18 Consultation as well as the recommendations of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (22 July 2015) and that of this Committee at its meeting on 18 August 2015 adjourned to 19 August 2015.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report considers the responses to the Regulation 18 public consultation on the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for policies DM13 which deals with Sustainable Transport, DM14 which deals with Public Transport and DM15 which deals with Park and Ride as well as PKR1 (1) and PKR1(2).
- 2.2 Policies DM13 to DM15 and the responses to Regulation 18 public consultation were originally reported to the Council's Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2014 and then to Cabinet on 14 January 2015 as part of a report considering a

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

range of other Development Management policies from the emerging local plan. The schedule of issues raised in the Regulation 18 Consultation and the officer response to policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 is attached at Appendix One.

- 2.3 Attached at Appendix Two is a schedule of issues raised to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation draft and officer responses to policies PKR1 (1) and PKR1 (2). These have not been considered previously by Councillors.
- 2.4 The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 16 December 2014 recommended to Cabinet that the development management policies be amended as recommended by Officers in the schedule of responses to consultation and that they be approved for Regulation 19² public consultation. The Committee also recommended that criterion 3 (iii) to policy DM13 be amended to read:

Development proposals must:

' 3iii. Demonstrate that development in, or likely to adversely affect, in particular where a number of developments are likely to result in cumulative impact, that Air Quality Management Areas incorporate mitigation measures to reduce impact to an acceptable level, in line with the Borough's air quality action plan.'

- 2.5 At their meeting on 14 January 2015, Cabinet resolved to defer consideration of policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 until the results of transport modelling (VISUM) became available.
- 2.6 The results of the VISUM strategic traffic model have now been received and the Forecasting Report and commentary were reported to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 22 July 2015 and to the meeting of the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 18 August adjourned to 19 August 2015.
- 2.7 The Maidstone Joint Transportation Board, an advisory committee, resolved on the 22 July 2015 that:

'This Board recommends to Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Waste and to Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee that a combination of DS2 and DS3 form the basis of the Integrated Transport Strategy for Maidstone to underpin the Local Plan. This with the exception of the following and subject to costing to ascertain affordability and the evaluation of feasibility, sustainability and deliverability;

- Additional North/South Park and Ride removed from DS2;
- All references to percentage targets removed from DS2;
- That it is specified with reference to parking costs, it refers to long-term car parks; and
- That frequent bus services are encouraged with appropriate junction improvements but at no detriment to existing traffic capacity.'

This recommendation was formally noted at the meeting of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 18 August 2015 adjourned to 19 August 2015.

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

2.8 A report on the outcomes of the VISUM modelling was also presented to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 18 August 2015 adjourned to 19 August 2015. In reaching their decision the minutes note that;

'The Committee discussed the recommendation from the Joint Transport Board (JTB) and considered the concerns it raised. The Committee considered the recommendation was clear but felt it was important that Officers were able to do further work on transport policies, taking into account the JTB recommendation, while maintaining the ability to report back to this Committee if it was found they were unable to *not* disrupt traffic flows.'

Councillors resolved the following:

'1. That the Committee notes the results of the transport modelling undertaken jointly by MBC and KCC and its implications for the preparation of the Integrated Transport Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

2. That the Committee's broad support be noted of the Maidstone Joint Transport Board's recommendation dated 23 July 2015 and requests officers to do further work on transport policy development.'

2.9 The text and supporting text of policies DM13, DM14, DM15, PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) as presented in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 are attached at Appendix Three.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Option 1

3.1 Keep policies DM13, DM14, DM15 and PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) as drafted in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014.

- Such an approach however, would not take into account any of the representations received during the Regulation 18 Consultation period nor would it take into account the outcomes of the VISUM modelling.

Option 2

3.2 Amend policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 in line with the proposed changes recommended to the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2014 together with the change(s) recommended by that Committee and subsequently recommended to Cabinet on 14 January 2015.

- This would take into account officers' consideration of representations received, but would not take into account the outcomes of the VISUM modelling.

Option 3

3.3 Amend policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 in the light of the changes recommended to Cabinet on 14 January 2015 and amend policies PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) to reflect the representations received at Regulation 18 Consultation stage as well as the recommendations of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (22 July 2015) and this committee at its meeting on

18 August (adjourned to 19 August 2015) to reflect the outputs from the VISUM modelling.

- This option would take into account all representations received and also the outputs from the VISUM modelling.

- 3.4 Whichever option is chosen it will be necessary to continue the work on the revised draft Integrated Transport Strategy in conjunction with Kent County Council to provide the impetus, along with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, for the implementation of the measures foreshadowed in the policies.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to adopt Option 3 as set out above. This will ensure that account is taken of the representations received at Regulation 18 Consultation stage and also of the outcomes of the recently completed VISUM modelling and the recommendation of this Committee and the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board at earlier meetings.
- 4.2 Maidstone, as the county town, faces transport challenges which are not uncommon across the country. These challenges may be characterised as increasing road congestion which arises as a result of population and private car usage growth, leading to environmental degradation and health and environmental implications through more pollution, parking and so on.
- 4.3 Furthermore, Maidstone has relatively poor public transport infrastructure compared with similar sized towns in the South East such as Dartford/Gravesend and Chelmsford. It also compares unfavourably with neighbouring towns in Kent. 2011 census data shows that Maidstone has a higher than average usage of, and dependence on, the private car and there are also economic implications from lost time and perceptions that conditions are deteriorating significantly.
- 4.4 As well as existing conditions, the Local Plan which the Borough is required to produce proposes approximately 18560 extra houses and more employment and economic activity throughout the Borough. This will lead to impacts on transport networks which need to be mitigated if the situation is not to worsen. However future planning needs to be kept separate from dealing with the present situation and existing concerns should not fetter a full understanding of the implications of future development which will continue whether there is a plan or not.
- 4.5 The strategy that is needed for Maidstone should also be an integrated one, which means that it is necessary for it to encompass transport provision across all modes. Recent research has shown comprehensively that traffic always outgrows road capacity if no other demand restricting measures are put in place, and this would certainly be the case in Maidstone. The strategy will also need to take account of the borough's geography as sustainable modes of transport are more feasible in some locations and for some journeys than others.

National and regional context

- 4.6 National transport policy is the responsibility of the Department for Transport (DfT) and local authorities through the statutory planning process. The DfT's stated vision is for:

"a transport system that is an engine for economic growth but one that is also greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities"

- 4.7 This vision is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which emphasises the importance of rebalancing the transport system in favour of sustainable transport modes whilst encouraging local authorities to plan proactively for the transport infrastructure necessary to support growth.

Paragraphs 29 & 30 state:

'Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.'

'30. Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.'

Paragraphs 34 and 35 state

'34. Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. However this needs to take account of policies set out elsewhere in this Framework, particularly in rural areas.

35. Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to

- accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;
- create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;
- incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and
- consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.'

Paragraph 41 states

'Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.'

- 4.8 Similarly, KCC in its overall 'Vision for Kent', the county-wide strategy for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent's communities has three major ambitions:
- "Grow the economy by supporting business, including improvements to the transport network and the provision of broadband
 - Tackle disadvantage by..... provision of comprehensive, reliable and affordable public transport
 - Put the citizen in control...including support for community bus and rails schemes."
- 4.9 While the Transport Delivery Plan for Kent (2010) concentrates on major strategic issues such as the Lower Thames crossing, Operation Stack and Foreign Lorry Road Charging, the Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011) re-emphasises; 'Growth without Gridlock', 'A Safer and Healthier County', 'Supporting independence', 'Tackling Climate Change' and 'Enjoying Life in Kent' and the promotion of sustainable transport policies.

Local policy context

- 4.10 The above national and county policy context and MBC's own Sustainable Community Strategy (2013) (SCS) promotes the integrated nature of a transport strategy for the Borough. The SCS acknowledges the significance of congestion and the overriding aim of an integrated transport strategy to provide genuine transport choice for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 4.11 The Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan 2000 recognises the need for the promotion of sustainable transport and encouraging a modal shift away from a reliance on the use of the private car. It recognises the need to produce an integrated Transport Strategy (policy T1) and the need to prioritise bus and hackney carriage access along identified corridors (Policy T2) and promoted Park & Ride (policy T17).
- 4.12 Existing draft policies seek to promote accessibility, and economic prosperity, and the significance of Maidstone as a regional transport hub. Specifically improvements to the transport network identified in the Local Plan include minor highways improvements and the promotion of public transport including park and ride and bus prioritisation.
- 4.13 The policies and supporting text have been re-examined in the light of the representations received at Regulation 18 Consultation stage and the outcomes of the strategic VISUM traffic modelling and the resultant recommendations of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (22 July 2015) and this Committee at it last meeting on 18/19 August 2015.

- 4.14 A reference has been added to the supporting text relating to a potential Leeds-Langley Relief Road (LLRR) that was included by the County Council as part of the VISUM modelling in tested options DS1 and DS3. Representations have been made by the County Council and others that the road should be made subject to an explicit policy indicating that it will be delivered within the plan period i.e. prior to 2031.
- 4.15 The case for the justification for construction and also the delivery of a LLRR lies with the County Council as the Highways Authority. However, there are currently a number of uncertainties relating to this potential project. To-date the detailed costings (estimates vary between £50 and £80 million), environmental and route appraisals and also an assessment of whether future housing requirements would necessitate and also support construction of a LLRR which will be required to progress the proposals, have not been undertaken.
- 4.16 Councillors are advised that a very recent Inspector's report (dated 14 August 2015) into the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Joint Local Plan, which was found sound with modifications, also made reference to a highway proposal in that plan area. The Inspector commented as follows;
- '121. Reference to a 'safeguarded' route for the A354 Weymouth to Portland Relief Road was included in the adopted LP (Local Plan) 2005 to support economic growth and to mitigate the impact of vehicular traffic accessing the island. A new route could be of considerable benefit to businesses and local residents but it appears the County Council have doubts as to how it could be funded. Uncertainty over timescales runs the risk of unreasonably 'blighting' land and properties. Until further work to assess alternative routes, economic and environmental factors, timescales and funding sources have been fully considered I am not persuaded there is sufficient justification for safeguarding a route at present.'*³
- 4.17 It is considered that the situation with regard to a potential LLRR and the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is very similar. The uncertainties are such that they render safeguarding a potential route unjustified in the current local plan period. However, it is considered appropriate to 'signpost' the potential delivery of a road by an indication in the supporting text that the proposals would be subject to detailed consideration with a view to potential construction of the LLRR post 2031 at the first review of the Local Plan.
- 4.18 The largest change recommended to the policies is the deletion of the previously proposed additional Park and Ride Site at Linton Crossroads and also the site at Old Sittingbourne Road in Policy DM15 and as a consequence deletion of policy PKR1.
- 4.19 Having assessed and reviewed the representations received at Regulation 18 Consultation stage, it is considered that the provision of a park and ride facility on the Linton Crossroads site whilst appropriate in transport and accessibility terms, would have on balance such a negative impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, particularly from the lighting which would be situated at the crest of the scarp slope which lies

³ Report on the Examination into the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Joint Local Plan 14 August 2015 p.25.

within the proposed Greensand Ridge Area of Local Landscape Value as to outweigh the transport benefits.

- 4.20 In relation to the Old Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride Site (PKR1 (2)), the representations received from the landowner have again made it clear that the site is not available for the intended use. It is therefore recommended that this proposed allocation is also deleted.
- 4.21 Policy DM15 should therefore be amended accordingly to delete reference to the Linton Crossroads and Old Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride sites. Policy PKR1 should also be deleted and in addition the criteria and site plans relating to PKR1(1) Linton Crossroads and PKR1 (2) Old Sittingbourne Road. It will be necessary therefore to undertake further Regulation 18 Consultation on the proposed deletion.
- 4.22 Clearly there will be a need to ensure that the loss of these potential pieces of sustainable transport infrastructure is mitigated. It is considered that it would be appropriate to work with the public transport service operators to facilitate the introduction of express/limited stop buses on the radial routes into Maidstone particularly from the north including the Newnham Park Area and from the south, including Coxheath, that would serve the town centre and also Maidstone East/Maidstone West Railway Stations, primarily in the morning and evening peaks to encourage modal shift together with the implementation of bus priority measures to seek to secure the reliability and speed of such services. Preliminary discussions with the largest operator indicate that this is a potentially deliverable option. Details would be included within the ITS.
- 4.23 The Committee is therefore, recommended to approve the following changes to the supporting text for transport policies DM13, DM14 and DM15. Additions to the policies and their supporting text are in **bold text** and deletions are in ~~strike through text~~. Paragraphs 4.24 to 4.53 set out the supporting text to the policies as proposed to be amended. The tables at paragraphs 4.54 to 4.56 set out the proposed revisions to policies DM13, DM14 and DM15 respectively. Paragraphs 4.57 to the table at paragraph 4.62 now show the deletion of policy PKR1 and its supporting text in its entirety. As a consequence of the recommended deletion of policy PKR1, the development criteria and policy plans at pages 327 to 330 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 should also be deleted. The proposed deletion of policy PKR1 and the resultant amendments to policy DM15 will need to be subject to Regulation 18 Consultation. The changes to policies DM13 and DM14 are recommended for Regulation 19 Consultation.

Policy DM13 - Sustainable transport Transport

- 4.24 Working in partnership with Kent County Council (the local ~~transport~~ **highway** authority), ~~the~~ Highways **England** Agency, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the Council will facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the local plan. An Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), prepared by the Council and its partners, will have the aim of facilitating economic prosperity and improving accessibility across the borough and to the town centre, in order

to promote Maidstone as a regionally important transport hub. The ITS needs to address a number of transport challenges as set out below.

Highway network

- 4.25 Maidstone borough has an extensive highway network which provides direct links both within the borough and to neighbouring areas including Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling, the Medway Towns, Tunbridge Wells and London. Four north-south and east-west primary routes pass through the town centre and numerous secondary routes run in concentric rings around the town, providing local links to the rural parts of the Borough. Maidstone also enjoys good connections to the motorway network, including direct access to four junctions of the M20.
- 4.26 The principal constraint on the borough's urban road network is the single crossing point of the River Medway at the Town Centre bridges gyratory, where the A20, A26 and A229 meet. From this point, congestion spreads along the main radial approaches to Maidstone during the morning and evening peaks, leading drivers to seek alternative routes for longer journeys around the periphery of the town.
- 4.27 **Strategic VISUM traffic modelling was jointly commissioned by the Council and Kent County Council to assess traffic growth and the impact on the local highway network of background traffic growth and planned development in the period 2014 - 2031. The modelling conducted in 2012 indicates that by 2031, 26, the combination of background traffic growth and planned housing and employment development will increase the number of person trips in Maidstone during the morning peak hour by 4217%. Significantly however, background growth associated with increased economic activity and greater car ownership is expected to have over one and a half times the impact on trip generation of new housing and employment, demonstrating that robust solutions to Maidstone's transport challenges are required. regardless of the development proposed in the local plan.**
- 4.28 Maidstone has an average vehicle occupancy of approximately 1.23 persons per car, which is significantly lower than the UK average of 1.6 persons per car. This represents an inefficient use of road space and contributes to greater traffic congestion and air pollution. Whilst it is recognised that the private car will continue to provide the primary means of access in areas where alternative travel choices are not viable, the traffic data suggests that the ITS should focus on demand management measures that enable a higher people-moving capacity over the existing road network. Specifically, the strategy should aim for a reduction in the number of single-occupancy car trips into Maidstone Town Centre by long-stay commuters – particularly during peak periods – which can be achieved through interventions such as enhanced **public transport provision on the main radial routes**, Park and Ride and walking and cycling infrastructure. This approach, combined with targeted capacity improvements to strategic junctions such as the bridges gyratory **in the Town Centre**, would improve the reliability and hence attractiveness of public transport, as well as providing businesses and freight operators with greater journey time reliability.

- 4.29 **Some of the VISUM modelling options tested included a proposed Leeds-Langley Relief Road (LLRR) that would relieve traffic on the current B2163 towards junction 8 of the M20 motorway. The results indicate that the construction of such infrastructure may have a beneficial impact on some traffic movement patterns in the South East sector of Maidstone. This is however seen against the context of traffic movements generally in which Maidstone Town Centre itself and intra-urban movements (from one part of the Maidstone urban area to another) are the key drivers behind trips on the network.**
- 4.30 **The case for the justification of the construction and the delivery of a LLRR lies with the County Council as the Highways Authority. To-date, the detailed costings (estimates vary between £50 and £80 million), environmental and route appraisals and also an assessment of whether future housing requirements would necessitate and also support construction of a LLRR which will be required to progress the proposals, have not yet been undertaken. It is therefore considered appropriate to give detailed consideration to the potential construction of the LLRR post 2031 at the first review of the Local Plan.**

Car Parking

- 4.31 The provision of an adequate supply of well-located and reasonably priced car parking is essential to support the Borough's retail economy, to facilitate access to areas where alternative travel modes are limited or unavailable, and to ensure that mobility impaired persons are able to access key education, employment and leisure opportunities. However, the supply of car parking also drives demand for limited road space and can therefore contribute to traffic congestion and poor air quality, as well as making more sustainable modes of travel less attractive. Therefore it is crucial that MBC and its partners avoid an overprovision of parking, particularly in and around Maidstone Town Centre.
- 4.32 The ITS will seek **to** address parking issues by producing a refreshed Town Centre Parking Strategy. **A key aspect of this strategy for example, will be the use of measures to provide disincentives to the use of long-term car-parking in the Town Centre, whilst**, prioritising shoppers and visitors; ~~giving consideration to a reduction in town centre long stay parking supply;~~ **by** utilising **long-stay** town centre parking tariffs to encourage a shift to sustainable modes of transport such as Park and Ride and reviewing the Residents' Parking Zones to ensure they are fair, simple and meet the needs of all road users.

Park and Ride

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

- 4.34 During the 2012/13 financial year some 400,000 transactions were recorded on Park and Ride bus services, which equates to a fall of 7% from the previous year. The Park and Ride services are also available for use by concessionary pass holders, and indeed approximately half of the trips recorded in 2012/13 were made by this group.
- 4.35 The reduction in patronage can be partially explained by the recession and suppressed economic activity in the town centre. Usage of the Park and Ride service should also be considered in the context of the supply of town centre car parking (both public and private) and the associated parking tariffs. The Park and Ride service is used by both commuters and shoppers; however it accounts for just 2% of all person trips into the town centre during peak periods (excluding walking and cycling), compared to 12% for bus and 77% for private car. The service currently requires a significant annual subsidy and therefore the ITS is seeking to take a targeted approach to address this situation.
- 4.36 The ITS **will seek to retain the** ~~is to targeting the provision of an enhanced Park and Ride service, with an improved site on Old Sittingbourne Road in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and on the A229 corridor at Linton Crossroads to the south of the town,~~ **existing sites at Willington Street and London Road. All sites are** aimed at long-stay commuters into the Town Centre. Bus priority measures will also be provided on Park and Ride routes in tandem with the ~~enhanced~~ service.

Bus services

- 4.37 Maidstone borough has a well-established bus network provided principally by Arriva, together with a number of smaller independent operators. The network is centred on Maidstone town centre and combines high frequency routes serving the suburban areas with longer distance services providing connections to many of the outlying villages and neighbouring towns, including Ashford, Sittingbourne, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and the Medway Towns.
- 4.38 Although KCC and the Council do not directly influence the provision of commercial bus services, both authorities work closely with the operators to improve the quality of services and to ensure that the highway network is planned and managed in a way that facilitates the efficient operation of buses. This relationship has been formalised through the signing of a voluntary Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) agreement, which includes commitments by Arriva, KCC and MBC to work collectively to improve all aspects of bus travel and to increase passenger numbers.
- 4.39 **Given the deletion of the previously proposed Park and Ride sites at Linton Crossroads and at Old Sittingbourne Road, the Council will work with the service operators to procure express/limited stop bus services on the radial routes into Maidstone (particularly from the north including the Newnham Park Area and from the south on the A229 and A274) to the Town Centre and railway stations in the morning and evening peaks to encourage modal shift together with the implementation of bus priority measures to seek to secure the reliability and speed of such services.**

- 4.40 A number of services cannot be provided commercially and are classed as socially necessary services that require subsidy from KCC. These primarily consist of school, rural, evening and weekend services, which provide access to education, employment, healthcare, or essential food shopping. KCC also completed the countywide roll out of the Kent Freedom Pass during 2009. The County Council now provides free travel on almost all public bus services in Kent **Monday to Friday** for an annual fee of **£250** ~~£100~~ for young people living in the county and in academic years 7 to 11. The County Council also assumed responsibility from MBC for the administration and funding of the statutory Kent and Medway Concessionary Travel Scheme for disabled people, their companions and those aged over 60, in April 2011. As the Local Education Authority, KCC also provides free or subsidised home-to-school transport to children who meet the criteria.
- 4.41 Through the ITS bus service frequencies will look to be increased (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone Town Centre. **(The A274 Sutton Road corridor from Parkwood already has an 8-minute frequency)**. Bus priority measures will be provided in order to encourage the use of public transport **by seeking to ensure the reliability and frequency of services** and services will continue to be made more accessible to all users.

Rail services

- 4.42 Three railway lines cross Maidstone borough, serving a total of 14 stations. The operator of the vast majority of rail services in the area is the current south east franchise holder, Southeastern.
- 4.43 The principal rail route serving Maidstone town is the London Victoria to Ashford International line (also referred to as the Maidstone East Line), which includes stations at Maidstone East, Bearsted, Hollingbourne, Harrietsham and Lenham. The average journey time between Maidstone East and London Victoria is an hour and runs half-hourly. The London Charing Cross/Cannon Street to Dover Priory/Ramsgate line passes through the south of the borough, with stations at Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn. Charing Cross and Cannon Street stations are located in close proximity to the City of London and hence services on this line are heavily used by commuters, which, places pressure on the limited station car park capacity in these villages.
- 4.44 The Medway Valley Line, connecting Strood and Paddock Wood, runs from north to south across the borough, with stations at Maidstone Barracks, Maidstone West, East Farleigh, Wateringbury, Yalding and Beltring. The line operates as part of the Kent Community Rail Partnership, which has delivered improvements to the stations and promoted the service widely. In May 2011, Southeastern commenced the operation of direct peak-time services between London St Pancras and Maidstone West via Strood and High Speed 1 on a trial basis. This has reduced rail journey times between Maidstone and London to 48 minutes and provided commuters from the town with the option of travelling to an alternative London terminus closer to the City. Collectively, these enhancements have contributed to a 25% increase in passenger numbers on the Medway Valley Line since 2007, putting it in the top 10 lines nationally for ridership growth according to the Association of Train Operating Companies.

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

Air quality

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

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

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

Influencing travel behaviour

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

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

Cycling and walking

4.50 Both KCC and **the Council** ~~MB~~ are therefore committed to the provision of a comprehensive cycle network for residents and visitors to Maidstone.

4.51 The Borough currently has a number of cycle routes that link the town centre to the suburban areas; however connections within the town and further afield are limited and there is a lack of cycle parking at key

destinations. Consequently, cycle use in Maidstone is very low, the 2011 Census travel to work data indicated that 1% of work trips were undertaken by bike. However 12% of journeys to work were made on foot.

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

Assessing the transport needs of development

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

4.54

Policy DM13

Sustainable Transport

1. Working in partnership with Kent County Council (the local **highway transport** authority), ~~the Highways Agency~~ **Highways England**, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the Borough Council will facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the local plan. An Integrated Transport Strategy, prepared by the council and its partners, will have the aim of facilitating economic prosperity and improving accessibility across the borough and to Maidstone town centre, in order to promote the town as a regionally important transport hub.

2. In doing so, the council and its partners will:

- i. Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by Maidstone's Local Plan and facilitates economic prosperity;
- ii. Manage demand on the transport network through enhanced public transport and **the continued** Park and Ride services and walking and cycling improvements;

- iii. Improve highway network capacity and function at key locations and junctions across the borough;
- iv. Manage parking provision in the town centre and the wider borough to ensure it is fair and proportionate and supports demand management;
- v. Improve transport choice across the borough and seek to influence travel behaviour;
- vi. Develop the strategic and public transport links to and from Maidstone, ~~and connections to the rural service centres;~~ **including increased bus service frequency along the radial routes into the town centre and its railway stations, particularly in the morning and evening peak travel times;**
- vii. Work with service providers to improve bus links to the rural service centres and larger villages, including route options and frequency;**
- viii. Improve strategic links to Maidstone across the county and to wider destinations such as London;
- ~~viii~~ **ix.** Ensure the transport network provides inclusive access for all users; and
- ~~ix~~ **x.** Address the air quality impact of transport.

3. Development proposals must:

- i. Demonstrate that the impacts of trips generated to and from the development are remedied or mitigated, **including where feasible an exploration of delivering mitigation measures ahead of the development being occupied;**
- ii. Provide a satisfactory Transport Assessment and a satisfactory Travel Plan in accordance with the threshold levels set by Kent County Council's Guidance on Transport Assessments and Travel Plans; and
- iii. Demonstrate that development in, or likely to adversely affect, **in particular where a number of developments are likely to result in cumulative impact, that** Air Quality Management Areas incorporates mitigation measures to reduce impact to an acceptable level, **in line with the Borough's Air Quality Action Plan.**

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

4.55

Policy DM 14

Public transport

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

passengers, including people with disabilities.

2. Proposals for major development will be permitted if adequate provision is made, where necessary and appropriate, within the overall design and site layout for the following facilities for public transport secured through legal agreements:

- i. Priority or exclusive provision for public service vehicle access to or through the proposed development area;
- ii. Safe and convenient passenger waiting facilities, information systems and signed pedestrian access routes;
- iii. Suitable provision for disabled access to the waiting facilities from all parts of the development area; and
- iv. Suitable provision for disabled access onto buses from the waiting facilities.

4.56

Policy DM 15

Park and ride

1. The following sites, as defined on the policies map, are designated bus park and ride sites:

- ~~i. Old Sittingbourne Road (to serve the A249 corridor);~~
- i. London Road (to serve the A20 west corridor);
- ii. Willington Street (to serve the A20 east corridor); and
- ~~iv. Linton Crossroads (to serve the A229 corridor).~~

2. The provision of new or replacement park and ride facilities should meet the following criteria:

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

~~Policy PKR1 – Park and ride allocations~~

~~4.57 Park and ride is an important part of the council's transport vision for Maidstone and the rest of the borough. The existing park and ride service accommodates demand for access from the A249/M20 transport corridor and from east and west on the A20 transport corridor. The Integrated Transport Strategy sets out how the service can help to accommodate journeys from new housing and employment developments in the borough. The A229 transport corridor from the south of the borough into Maidstone (Staplehurst, Marden, Linton, Coxheath, Boughton Monchelsea and Loose) is an area of strong demand, which is currently not served.~~

~~4.58 The A229/B2163 Linton crossroads is allocated for a new park and ride facility. This location is at an appropriate distance from the town centre to intercept traffic movements early enough along the A229 corridor and provide easy access to the identified catchment area. Along the length of the A229 corridor bus priority measures will help provide faster access to~~

and from the town centre in peak times than an equivalent private vehicle journey could achieve.

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

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

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

4.62

Policy PKR 1

Park and ride allocation

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

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

5 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) was subject to public consultation and the issues raised in the representations which were received are discussed in this report and its appendices.

6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 As part of the Local Plan process further iterations of Policies DM13, DM14, DM15, PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) will be subject to public consultation.

7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The adoption of the Local Plan will assist in the delivery of the Council’s corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Council’s priorities include the outcome of securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough and the consultation on the strategic plan showed this outcome to be the second highest scoring outcome.</p>	<p>Head of Finance & Resources</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>A key risk to the local plan programme relates to the Council’s ability to provide a package of sustainable transport measures alongside the infrastructure necessary to support planned growth.</p>	<p>Head of Planning and Development</p>
<p>Financial</p>	<p>The cost of the VISUM modelling has been funded jointly by the Council and KCC. The cost has been met from the existing budget. Future funding requirements will need to take account of available resources which may impact on other Council priorities.</p> <p>Delivery of the works required by the infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) have been identified as a priority for the Council over the last four years. As such the Council has a policy of setting aside resources from New Homes Bonus to support the plan. The IDP as previously developed, without the LLRR, was recognised as requiring additional resource input above the funding the Council can generate even accounting for</p>	<p>Head of Finance and Resources</p>

	potential developer funding (s106 and/or CIL).	
Staffing	N/A	Head of Planning and Development
Legal	There are no legal implications directly arising from this report, although the Legal Team continues to provide advice and guidance on local plan matters and to review any legal implications of reports	Kate Jardine, Solicitor, Team Leader (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	The policies were informed by the EqIA for regulation 18 public consultation on the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, which will be reviewed to support the Regulation 19 version of the local plan. The Regulation 19 version of the local plan will be considered by SPS&T Committee before approval by Full Council	Policy and Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The policies seek to deliver a package of sustainable transport measures in addition to specific highway improvements as part of the local plan which aims to deliver sustainable growth as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.	Head of Planning and Development
Community Safety	N/A	Head of Planning and Development
Human Rights Act	N/A	Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	Consultants are used to prepare specialist or technical evidence to support the local plan and are appointed in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures.	Head of Planning and Development & Head of Finance and Resources
Asset Management	There are no direct implications arising from this report.	Head of Finance & Resources

8 REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Schedule of issues raised to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation draft and officer responses relating to policies DM13, DM14 and DM15
 - Appendix 2: Schedule of issues raised to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation draft and officer responses relating to policies PKR1(1) and PKR1(2)
 - Appendix 3: Supporting text and policies DM13, DM14 DM15 PKR1 (1) and PKR1(2) as published in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014
 - Appendix 4: Proposed supporting text and criteria for policies DM13 and DM14
 - Appendix 5: Proposed criteria for policy DM15
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9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None