

APPENDIX FOUR

Supporting text and policy criteria for policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport) and DM14 (Public Transport) with amendments.

(Paragraph numbering as Regulation 18 Consultation Draft)

Additions

~~Deletions~~

Policy DM13 - Sustainable transport

Transport

11.59 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

11.60 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.

11.61 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.

11.62 **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 ~~42~~**17**%. ~~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.~~

11.63 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.

11.64 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.

11.65 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

11.66 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.

11.67 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

11.68 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.

11.69 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.

11.70 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.

11.71 ~~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

11.72 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.

11.73 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.

11.74 **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.**

11.75 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.

- 11.76** 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

- 11.77** 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.
- 11.78** 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.
- 11.79** 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, Watlington, 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.

11.80 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

11.81 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.

11.82 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

11.83 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.

11.84 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

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

11.86 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.

11.87 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

11.88 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.

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.

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.