

Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee

1 December 2015

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

Yes

Integrated Transport Strategy

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Steve Clarke, Principal Planning Officer; Chris Berry, Interim Team Leader, Spatial Policy
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the draft Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (attached as Appendix A) be noted.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough -

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	1/12/2015

Integrated Transport Strategy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers a draft Integrated Transport Strategy (“ITS”) that will sit alongside and inform the policies of the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The draft ITS promotes sustainable transport policies and interventions to support the development proposed in the Local Plan.
 - 1.2 An initial ITS was prepared for public consultation in 2012 to support the Maidstone Core Strategy but this has been superseded following the preparation for the Maidstone Local Plan. This draft ITS takes account of present conditions and has been prepared in cooperation with Kent County Council as a local highway authority and will guide the provision of transport infrastructure in all modes throughout the Borough area.
 - 1.3 The draft ITS is presented as Appendix 1 for information at this stage.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Section 80 of the Local Transport Act 2008 gives local authorities, acting jointly, the power to review the effectiveness and efficiency of transport within their area and to propose their own arrangements to support more coherent planning and delivery of local transport. Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council cooperated to prepare a document for public consultation for local transport provision in 2012.
- 2.2 The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy was first published for public consultation in August 2012. It aimed to set out the future for transport in Maidstone until 2026 and described the policy context, the existing transport networks and the challenges they face.
- 2.3 Objectives for transport provision were identified and an action plan proposed to address the requirements for the new development proposed by the Maidstone Core Strategy at that stage.
- 2.4 Following public consultation and as a result of the publication of the NPPF in March 2012, the Borough Council decided to proceed with the preparation of a Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy and this necessitated a major review of supporting documents and policies. This revised draft Integrated Transport Strategy has been prepared to inform and guide transport policies and proposals in the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Draft Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy

- 2.5 At present, Maidstone Borough faces acute transport challenges, from managing increasing traffic congestion to mitigating the environmental issues associated with transportation, including poor air quality in the urban area. In peak periods, parts of the road network operate at or near capacity and, especially to the south of the Borough, people find it difficult

to access the services they need due to the lack of transport options available to them.

2.6 The draft ITS comprises eleven main sections as follows:

- Transport Vision
- The Wider Picture
- Strategic Priorities
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Policy Context
- Strategic Objectives
- Current Issues
- Achieving the Strategy
- Developing the Modelling Context
- Funding, Delivery and Review
- Action Plans

2.5 This draft ITS is needed to provide a framework for transport planning and decision making in the Borough, which places an emphasis on addressing these issues through long term sustainable development of the transport network. The draft ITS seeks to address these issues through a range of policies and actions for the Borough Council and its partners, including KCC to implement.

2.6 The ITS will provide a policy framework and programme of schemes and interventions to support the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan, taking account of the committed and predicted levels of growth in homes and jobs and detailing the transport infrastructure and services necessary to deliver this growth. It will provide a detailed programme of transport interventions for Maidstone Borough, addressing existing and future challenges and consistent with national and local transport and planning policies.

2.7 The draft ITS is guided by analysis which includes both strategic and more detailed junction modelling which seeks to assess the impacts of new development on the transport network. Initially VISUM strategic modelling was used to provide a high level picture of the implications of major network changes, but increasingly specific junction modelling is providing guidance on where mitigation should take place.

2.8 This draft ITS is subject to further refinement in cooperation with Kent County Council as the highways authority and specific projects and proposals are identified for implementation within the Borough's Infrastructure Development Plan which will form a supporting document to the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan. It recommends actions for all modes of transport in the Borough, and key issues may be summarised as follows

Walking and Cycling

2.9 An agreed strategy with KCC has been developed for new and improved walking and cycling networks and facilities. These are related to development proposed in the Local Plan and for the improvement of existing provision throughout the Borough.

Public Transport

- 2.10 The primary actions recommended are the provision of a new bus route in north-west Maidstone and the major enhancement of the route between Maidstone, M20 Junction7 and Faversham/Sittingbourne/Sheerness. Local enhancement of existing services, such as to the rural service centres, will aim to improve links to the town centre and its railway stations.
- 2.11 Complementary and appropriate measures will be introduced to improve the quality and reliability of bus services. Recent initiatives with Arriva and KCC are leading to the promotion and introduction of a range of access improvements, including online ticketing and information, and mobile apps. Improvements may also include MBC involvement in the refurbishment or provision of a major new bus facility associated with the regeneration of the Mall Chequers Shopping Centre.

Park and Ride

- 2.12 Park and Ride has made a successful contribution to reducing car trips into Maidstone town centre, and changed conditions necessitate a comprehensive review of the service and its delivery. Recommended actions include the initiation of discussion with land-owners and providers with a view to identifying the potential for new provision. Parking
- 2.13 The key action is to manage parking in the urban area to promote the use of public transport and reduce long stay parking and the effective use of space. This forms part of a coordinated approach to encourage modal shift. Highways
- 2.14 MBC will work with KCC to deliver a package of highway improvements throughout the Borough which will add capacity at key junctions to the benefit of both public transport and car users. Detailed junction modelling is continuing to demonstrate the improvements that can be made to the existing network throughout the Local Plan period, and approximately half of the objectively assessed for housing has already been consented.
- 2.15 Potential strategic highway improvements may form part of the first review of the Local Plan, but would be expected to be delivered post 2031 if required. Such projects may include a Leeds – Langley Relief Road.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The ITS sets the direction for transport in the Borough, in line with the emerging Local Plan period which runs until 2031. It assesses the existing and emerging local policy and networks and outlines transport issues that arise from the development implications of the emerging Maidstone Local Plan and sets out the detail, in objectives and actions plans, of how these issues will be addressed.
- 3.2 The ITS aims to deliver transport infrastructure and wider reaching transport measures in a way that supports new development as well as supporting the residents and stakeholders that already live and work in the

Borough. The ITS aims to introduce sustainable transport measures and policies to reduce congestion, promote a shift to public transport, walking and cycling and improve road safety, air quality and the public realm.

- 3.3 The ITS forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Maidstone Local Plan in that it sets out the main priorities and elements of policies for sustainable transport provision in the Borough, and the requirements for developers and agencies with regard to transport infrastructure to support planned development.

4. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 4.1 Following Members consideration of the draft ITS, further work will be undertaken with KCC to refine the proposals and establish the priorities for interventions and actions.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The adoption of the ITS will assist in the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman
Risk Management	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	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman
Financial	The cost of VISUM modelling to-date has been funded jointly by MBC and KCC. The cost has been met from the existing budget.	Section 151 Officer & Head of Finance and Resources
Staffing	N/A	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman
Legal	The draft ITS has been produced as part of the robust evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.	Team Leader (Planning) Mid Kent Legal

		Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	An integrated transport strategy that tackles transport challenges through a combination of modes will take into account the needs of all groups including those without access to a car. An alternative strategy reliant on highway improvements will not promote equal access to employment, services and social opportunities and is likely to lead to increased social exclusion amongst lower income groups in particular.	Policy & Information Manager Anna Collier
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The implementation of an integrated transport strategy to promote sustainable travel where possible will encourage a reduction in single occupancy car travel and in turn a reduction in congestion and carbon emissions relative to a 'do minimum' situation. An alternative strategy reliant on highway improvements is likely to generate more traffic than the additional capacity provided. Increasing congestion and carbon emissions.	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman
Community Safety	N/A	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman
Human Rights Act	N/A	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman
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 & Development Rob Jarman & Section 151 Officer]
Asset Management	N/A	Head of Planning & Development Rob Jarman

6. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Draft Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy
 - Appendix 2: Draft Walking and Cycling Strategy
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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS