

**Strategic Planning  
Sustainability & Transportation  
Committee**

**13 January 2016**

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

**Yes**

**Integrated Transport Strategy Progress**

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

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That Members agree the Walking and Cycling Strategy for consultation
2. That Members agree the measures outlined in the draft ITS relating to Parking
3. That Members agree the measures outlined in the ITS relating to Ultra-low/zero emission vehicles
4. That Members Agree the revised draft ITS for consultation.
5. That Members support the continuation of work by MBC and KCC officers following consultation, and further cooperation.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

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

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transportation Committee	13 January 2016

# Integrated Transport Strategy Progress

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) has been produced in support of the proposed allocations in the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan, in particular, the housing allocations. It does this by identifying and providing the necessary highway and sustainable transport improvements and mitigation.
  - 1.2 This report provides further information to Members on the progress towards a completed draft ITS made since the meetings of this Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015.
  - 1.3 The latter followed a meeting of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 7 December. The resolution of the Maidstone Joint Transport Board(MJTB) sets the tone for continued joint working between MBC and KCC officers, to progress not only the draft ITS but also its implementation
  - 1.4 Progress towards the further work in several areas previously identified is described. As a result of the consideration of the issues raised by Members, particularly at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December, corresponding textual changes to the draft ITS have been incorporated and are discussed in the main body of the report. The ITS together with the Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP) supports the Local Plan and the Regulation 19 Consultation.
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## 2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) has been produced in support of the proposed allocations in the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan, in particular, the housing allocations. It does this by identifying and providing the necessary highway and sustainable transport improvements and mitigation.

### **SPS&T Committee 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

- 2.2 The draft ITS, was reported to this Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 with a recommendation that Members note the progress made to-date. Members did consider the documents and raised the following issues and requested that they be addressed in a future revised version of the ITS.
  - A request for more detail on the phasing of the strategy – when/what infrastructure and how it will be funded.
  - Inclusion of a section on School Travel Plans.
  - Thorough cumulative impact assessments to be carried out.
  - Clarity of the review process for the ITS – that if adopted in 2016 details of work to be carried out by officers and reported to members in the preceding 5 years leading to 2022 in order for a review to take place.

- Change the wording on page 44 (3.3) regarding the Objectively Assessed Housing Need – should not read “the Maidstone Borough LP will meet in full the identified OAN of 18,560...”
- Action plans to be more aspirational – include SMART targets.
- Include measures to encourage the use of electric cars.
- Ensure the ITS covers the whole of the Borough and not just focus on one area of concern.

#### Park and Ride

- Remove any reference to Park and Ride
- Include information on the alternative to Park and Ride – including a short term strategy from February 2016 when the Sittingbourne Road site closes

#### Buses

- Consider the use of Section 106 contributions to subsidise rural bus routes and improve reliability
- Consider the use of Section 106 contributions to improve/increase electric signage and not rely on just mobile apps for real-time service information
- Consider the use of Section 106 contributions for bus shelters
- Improvements to parking enforcement to reduce the impact on bus reliability
- Improvements to Maidstone Bus Station

#### And

- Do not refer to specific bus operators – aim to work with all operators
- Emphasise the work with Kent County Council (KCC) and bus operators on improving services
- Investigate extending the existing 6X service between Maidstone and Pembury hospitals into the town centres to reduce congestion on A26
- Work with KCC and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to implement bus prioritisation measures along the A26 to help improve the frequency of services to and from Maidstone
- Investigate using rail station car parks in the Rural Service Centres for buses to pull into to pick up passengers, using Section 106 contributions where appropriate

#### Rail

- Investigate the possibility of using the funds provided for a bridge over the Medway Valley Line at Tovil to replace with a halt instead
- Include a reference to a halt in Tovil to protect the area from development
- Investigate rail halts at Teston and Allington
- Include clear signage for getting from Maidstone East rail station to Maidstone West rails station– and vice versa
- Include aspirations for a rail link to Gatwick

#### Cycling

- Make targets more ambitious
- Week Street proposal to be open to cyclists only during certain times – 8pm to 8am too restrictive – consider 6pm to 9am

- Include additional policy to look at opportunities for road closures and contraflows to accommodate cycling
- Include the joining up of cycle routes in the action plan

#### Roads

- Clarify situation regarding proposals for the closure of Cranbourne Avenue at the Wheatsheaf Junction
- Clarify what is meant by bus priority measures
- Include junction improvements on the A229 in Tovil
- Signal intention for a Leeds/Langley relief
- Include improvements to the junction at the bottom of Willington Street

#### **MJTB 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

- 2.3 In between the two meetings of this Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> December, a meeting of the MJTB was held on 7<sup>th</sup> December. The Board unanimously agreed the following resolution:

*'We agree in the absence of an agreed transport strategy and in light of the evidence presented to this Board demonstrating Maidstone's significant highway capacity constraints, this Board recommends that a transport strategy be taken forward urgently by the Borough and County Councils covering the period of the Local Plan, with a further review completed in 2022.*

*The aim of this strategy will be to mitigate the transport impact of future growth, in the first instance up to 2022. The strategy should comprise of the key highway schemes and public transport improvements agreed by the Board, and further traffic modelling will be required to identify its impact. It is proposed that the £8.9 million growth fund monies identified for transport be used to accelerate the delivery of these improvements. Existing developer contributions may then be used to support further measures.*

*The agreed transport strategy should also develop the justification for a relief road between the A20 to the A274 (the Leeds and Langley Relief Road), along with a preferred route, in order to allow testing with other strategic transport options and identify all source of potential funding to enable the schemes to be implemented at the earliest opportunity.'*

- 2.4 Connected with that resolution, a number of key highway/junction capacity improvement and public transport schemes were agreed by the MJTB.

#### **SPS&T Committee 14 December 2015**

- 2.5 At the meeting of this Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December, Members agreed the following recommendations in addition to adopting and agreeing the resolution of the MJTB set out above:

1. Members agree to progress the highway improvements set out on pages 320, 321 and 322 of the Draft ITS. (Members should note that the page references refer to the page numbers on the agenda papers not the draft ITS itself).  
*(This was subject to removal of a reference to the widening of Sutton Road between Wallis Avenue and Loose Road in relation to the A274 Corridor and also removal of the reference to the closure of Cranbourne Avenue in relation to the proposed improvements at the*

*Wheatsheaf junction, although Members made it clear that Cranbourne Avenue is to be considered as part of the overall assessment of junction capacity improvements (both on page 46 of the draft ITS).*

2. Members agree to progress the provision of the North-west Maidstone Bus-Loop
3. Members agree to progress with the appropriate bus operator the improvement of a frequent bus service from Maidstone Town Centre via M20 junction 7 and Faversham-Sittingbourne-Sheerness.
4. Members agree to progress improvements to bus facilities at identified railway stations.
5. Members agree to pursue with the relevant owners and operators the refurbishment and possible re-provision of a central Maidstone Bus-station.
6. Members agree to pursue the use of LEP Growth-Fund monies to enable the early provision of the highway improvement measures in advance of development.

### **Further progress**

- 2.6 The decision made on 14 December has addressed a significant number of the issues raised by Members at the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December and the draft ITS now includes an agreed package of junction capacity interventions alongside specific public transport measures.
- 2.7 Further changes to the draft ITS to reflect Councillors' comments have also been made. The revised draft of the document is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
  - The changes recommended by Members on 14<sup>th</sup> December relating to Sutton Road widening and the Wheatsheaf junction have been made (see page 42 of the draft ITS)
  - Section 11 of the draft ITS now includes "SMART" targets for all Action Areas and a clear timetable for monitoring and review that aligns with that of the Local Plan (page 24).
  - The draft ITS has been amended to reflect the Council's aim to seek to meet in full the objectively assessed need (para 3.3 page 2).
  - All reference to Park & Ride has been removed.
  - The comments in relation to buses and rail have also been assessed and changes made in the Public Transport section of the draft ITS. (pages 34-40)
- 2.8 Given that Members have now resolved to progress the highway/junction capacity and public transport in addition to the drafting changes to the draft ITS referred to above, there are two main areas of the draft ITS that have not been agreed. These are Walking and Cycling and Parking/Ultra Low/Zero Emission Vehicles.
- 2.9 Other matters remain outstanding and work continues on these. However, they are not critical to the function of the ITS in supporting the Local Plan.

### **Walking and Cycling**

- 2.10 The Walking and Cycling strategy is proposed as an Appendix to the draft ITS. However, to provide clarity for Members, it is attached at Appendix 2

to this report along with a number of maps and illustrative evidence in support of the strategy.

2.11 The main action areas of the strategy in respect of Walking and Cycling are as follows:

#### Walking

Action W1	Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.
Action W2	Improve pedestrian accessibility across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre.
Action W3	Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central area of Maidstone
Action W4	Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce road traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.
Action W5:	Actively encourage and promote walk to school initiatives.
Action W6:	Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter.

#### Cycling

Action C1	Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.
Action C2	Maintain and further develop cycle routes in rural service centres, connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops) to housing.
Action C3	MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the Borough.
Action C4(a)	All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Years 7 to 9 will have access to Level 3 training.
Action C4(b)	Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including work place travel planning.
Action C5:	Support the Maidstone Cycling Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the Borough.
Action C6:	Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).
Action C7	Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans.
Action C8:	Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.
Action C9:	Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the Borough.
Action 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.
Action 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.
Action C12:	MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.
Action 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.
Action C14	MBC and KCC to commission a detailed audit of the Borough's walking and cycling corridors to refine the infrastructure interventions recommended in the Action Plan.

- 2.12 Improvements to the walking and cycling network are promoted in the strategy primarily through the creation of new links and upgrading existing provision, by filling-in the gaps in the existing network and the creation of an orbital walking and cycling route around the Maidstone urban area and the creation of cycle routes from rural services centres and smaller settlements to transport hubs together with improvements at these hubs as well as the creation of a rural circular cycle route to complement the existing NCR17/Pilgrims Cycle Trail and improve connectivity by cycle between the Rural Service Centres.
- 2.13 The revised draft of the strategy has addressed, where possible, Members' previous comments and considers a range of evidence in support of the actions contained within it. A network of potential routes and interventions and actions for both walkers and cyclists are set out in the strategy.
- 2.14 The suggestion by some Members that specific road closures and contraflow cycle lanes be introduced has been considered but has not been progressed at this stage. This aspect requires greater consideration and work alongside KCC and other partners. This will be undertaken as part of the monitoring and review of the Strategy moving forward to 2022.
- 2.15 Members are recommended to approve the strategy for consultation alongside the draft ITS.

### **Parking**

- 2.16 The thrust of the draft ITS is to provide disincentives to long-stay parking in Maidstone town centre to encourage modal shift. This will be achieved through a review of the pricing structure for car-parks in Maidstone town centre and through the introduction of dynamic car-park charging and the use of improved information to assist drivers.
- 2.17 A key problem with the current situation is that the town centre has a number of relatively small car parks in the inner town centre core and relatively little information (other than the King Street car-park which is just identified as open or closed) as to whether they are at capacity. This is in contrast to the Fremlin Walk car-park, the two Mall car-parks and Lockmeadow car-park which are included on electronic boards on key radial routes into the town centre and their remaining capacity displayed.
- 2.18 This leads to traffic circulating the town centre in the search for parking spaces adding to overall congestion and general issues with air quality.
- 2.19 The town centre parking and pricing strategy moving forward will, therefore, seek to encourage long-stay parking into the larger car-parks on the edge of the town centre (e.g. Sittingbourne Road/Vinters Road and Mote Road) and to improve the provision and reliability of roadside driver

information (including routing) showing available capacity in all publicly accessible off-street town centre car-parks. This will require additional technology in each of the car-parks to more closely monitor patronage to enable roadside information to be updated.

- 2.20 As part of this overall strategy, the impact of the impending closure of the Sittingbourne Road Park & Ride site in early 2016 will need to be monitored closely.
- 2.21 It is vitally important that the pricing strategy should be strong and also flexible enough to promote and support a corresponding increase in bus service frequencies to respond and to assist in encouraging modal shift towards public transport, cycling and walking to further reduce reliance on the use of the private car by 2031.

### **Ultra-low/Zero Emission Vehicles**

- 2.22 In relation to the encouragement of the use of vehicles with zero or ultra-low emissions, a two pronged process will be required. Firstly, adopted parking standards for new development will require appropriate charging points to be made available or for pre-wiring to be put in place to enable easier and less costly retro-fitting. Secondly, incentives such as discounted or free parking can be introduced to encourage the use of ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles for journeys into the town centre.
- 2.23 On 17 December 2015, the Government announced an extension to the existing plug-in car-grant beyond the existing notified February 2016 date, to at least the end of March 2018. The maximum subsidy has been lowered from £5000 to £4500 and two grant rates will be introduced from 1 March 2016 to focus financial support on the 'greenest' vehicles.
- Category 1 vehicles with a zero emission range of over 70 miles will benefit from the maximum £4500 grant.
  - Category 2 and 3 vehicles with a shorter zero emission range (petrol/diesel hybrid vehicles) will benefit from a grant of £2500.
  - A price-cap of £60,000 has also been introduced for category 2 and 3 vehicles; vehicles priced above this level will not receive a grant whereas Category 1 vehicles above this level will remain eligible for the full £4500 grant.

Importantly, the Government has also announced it will continue to provide a £500 grant to Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) users towards having a charging point installed at their home (estimated to be approximately 50% of the cost).

- 2.24 During the life of the Local Plan and its accompanying ITS, the technology surrounding vehicles will change, for example, the current limited use of hydrogen fuel-cell powered vehicles is likely to increase as more models come to the market.
- 2.25 Technology already exists to enable the manufacture of hydrogen through electrolysis with power provided by renewable sources to service fuel-cell cars for a reduced cost compared to a conventional filling station to which fuel is delivered. An example of this approach constructed by Honda opened

in 2014 in Swindon and is also used to fuel some for the Local Authority's vehicles.

2.26 The Council should seek to accommodate, in an appropriate location, the provision of a hydrogen filling station within the Borough.

2.27 Members are recommended to approve the commentary on Parking and Ultra-Low/Zero Emission Vehicles for inclusion in the draft ITS

### **Transport modelling**

2.28 The draft ITS has been guided by analysis which includes both strategic (VISUM) and more detailed junction modelling which seeks to assess the impacts of new development on the transport network. Initially, in late 2014 and early 2015, VISUM strategic modelling was used to provide a high level picture of the implications of major network changes according to various scenarios relating to highways and sustainable interventions.

2.29 Three scenarios for the development proposed by the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan were modelled initially, relating to a base case "Do Minimum" (DM) scenario with no transport interventions and two "Do Something" options (DS1 and DS2); a highways scenario based on junction improvement schemes (DS1), and a sustainable transport policies scenario (DS2). Subsequently, a further two options (DS3 and DS4) were modelled at the request of KCC, to investigate different quantum and locations of proposed development, with only the DS4 scenario reflecting the Local Plan's objectively assessed need for housing.

2.30 It is necessary to rerun the DM scenario to reflect the objectively assessed needs identified in the Local Plan and to agree assumptions for further modelling to reflect agreed ITS actions. A joint meeting between MBC officers and KCC officers and their consultants will agree the parameters for the further analysis.

2.31 Detailed technical assessment and design-work of individual highway and junction improvements is required as the highway improvement schemes are progressed and MBC and KCC officers are working together to bring forward a programme for the delivery of the junction improvements previously agreed by this Committee. Sustainable transport parameters reflecting mitigation measures will be incorporated into modelling scenarios, providing robust evidence for the policies and site allocations proposed in the Local Plan.

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## **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The ITS sets the direction for transport in the Borough, in line with the Local Plan period which runs to 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 Borough Local Plan and sets out the detail, in objectives and action plans, of how these issues will be addressed.

- 3.2 The ITS aims to deliver transport infrastructure and wider reaching 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 Borough 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 and the site allocations in the Local Plan.

#### **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**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The adoption of the ITS will assist in the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities	Head of Planning and Development Rob Jarman
<b>Risk Management</b>	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 development	Head of Planning and Development Rob Jarman
<b>Financial</b>	The cost of VISUM modelling to date has been agreed to be funded jointly by MBC and KCC. These and other costs will be met from existing budget.	Head of Finance and Resources
<b>Staffing</b>	Specialist transport consultants have been engaged to assist in the preparation of the strategy, funded through existing agreed budget	Head of planning and Development Rob Jarman
<b>Legal</b>	The draft ITS has been produced as part of the robust	Kate Jardine Team Leader

	evidence base for the emerging Local Plan as required by legislation	(Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	An ITS 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 and Information Manager Anna Collier
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The implementation of an ITS 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 Do Minimum. An alternative strategy reliant solely on highways improvements is likely to generate more traffic than the additional capacity provided, increasing congestion and carbon emissions.	Head of Planning and development Rob Jarman
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	Head of Planning and Development Rob Jarman
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	Head of Planning and Development Rob Jarman
<b>Procurement</b>	Consultants used to prepare specialist or technical evidence to support the Local Plan are appointed in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures.	Head of Planning and Development Rob Jarman and s151 Officer
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	Head of Planning and 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: Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy
  - Appendix 3: Pedal Cycle collisions 2012-2015 (Borough-wide)
  - Appendix 4: Pedestrian collisions 2012-2015 (Borough-wide)
  - Appendix 5: Pedal Cycle collisions 2012-2015 (Urban Area)
  - Appendix 6: Pedestrian collisions 2012-2015 (Urban Area)
  - Appendix 7: Walking and Cycling Actions Borough Area (A3)
  - Appendix 8: Walking and Cycling Actions Urban Area (A3)
  - Appendix 9: Walking and Cycling Actions Town Centre (A3)
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## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None