Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2012 – 2026

MAIDSTONE
Borough Council

Kent County Council

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in partnership with

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Executive Summary

E1.0 What is the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy?

E1.1 The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) sets out the future direction for transport in Maidstone until 2026. It describes the policy context or framework within which the strategy sits, but also the local context of the existing transport network. It details the challenges we currently face and how, through the objectives and action plan outlined in this strategy, we propose to address these challenges; the greatest being how we aim to provide the transport infrastructure and initiatives necessary to support new development planned to 2026.

E1.2 The ITS is directly linked to Maidstone's Core Strategy, which is the development plan to deliver 10,080 new homes together with employment growth to 2026. It also sits beneath and complements Kent County Council's (KCC)'s principal transport strategies: the *Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2016* (2011) and *Growth Without Gridlock* (2010).

E2.0 Why do we need a transport strategy?

E2.1 The Local Transport Act (2008) gives local authorities the power to review and propose their own arrangements for local transport governance to support more coherent planning and delivery of local transport. So in order to improve the transport offer of Maidstone, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and KCC have developed the strategy set out in this document.

E2.2 The existing traffic situation in Maidstone is one of significant congestion on our roads. Additional housing and employment to be provided during the Core Strategy period will add to this pressure on the transport network across the borough. The ITS is needed to better manage existing traffic congestion and to identify the transport infrastructure and initiatives necessary to support the growth provided for by the Core Strategy.

E2.3 The social and economic costs of transport are increasing as fuel prices rise, and as more vehicles use our roads. It is accepted that traffic congestion will continue to occur as the borough grows, so the ITS is designed to minimise this increase and to

mitigate the associated impacts on the local economy. The ITS is also directed towards improving road user safety and education.

E2.4 The environmental impacts of transport are also becoming increasingly apparent on a local, national and international scale. The ITS will address these issues; in particular poor air quality and emissions generated by vehicles using Maidstone's transport network.

E3.0 How will MBC and KCC address these issues?

E3.1 This strategy includes an action plan for delivery detailing 30 actions to achieve its vision and 8 objectives. These actions are phased for delivery over the short, medium and long term to ensure that the greatest effect is had on mitigating transport issues as the borough's population and economy grows. They include highway improvements at strategic development locations; improvements to infrastructure in the borough's Rural Service Centres (Harrietsham, Headcorn, Staplehurst, Marden and Lenham); a part reorganisation of the Park and Ride service; various initiatives to encourage more public transport use and increase road user safety; initiatives to encourage more walking and cycling through public realm improvement works; and means by which new development can better mitigate their impacts on the transport network.

E4.0 What are the five primary packages of transport infrastructure improvements of the strategy?

E4.1 All measures detailed in this strategy are considered important, however there are five primary packages of infrastructure improvements (or actions) that must be delivered by this strategy and so are given the highest priority. These are detailed in Chapter 6 of this document *An Action Plan for Delivery* and include the following:

- *Action 1: Implementing highway improvement schemes at strategic locations in the north west and south east of Maidstone Urban Area and in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and M20 Junction 8*

- *Action 2: Improvements to transport infrastructure at selected Rural Service Centres*
- *Action 15: Build a 'bus only' northbound lane on the A274 Sutton Road between its junction with Willington Street and the Wheatsheaf Junction*
- *Action 16: Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a 7min frequency is achieved on the majority of radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area*
- *Action 17: Maintain the existing P&R provision at the current level of service*

E4.2 These actions form the 'backbone' of the ITS and so are given the highest priority as it is these improvements (or actions) that will play the greatest role in providing the infrastructure and initiatives necessary to support the development aspirations of the Core Strategy and to better manage existing traffic congestion.

E5.0 Where will the funding come from?

E5.1 The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review confirmed that public sector funding for transport would be significantly reduced in the medium-term, meaning that local authorities cannot continue to rely on existing Government funding streams. The principal funding source currently available to KCC and MBC for the delivery of local transport schemes is developer contributions secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or through legal agreements (Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990) attached to planning permissions.

E5.2 In addition to developer contributions, there is the County Council's Integrated Transport Block allocation for the funding of smaller schemes including crash remedial measures, improvements to walking and cycling routes, traffic management schemes and bus priority measures.

E5.3 Revenue funding is used to cover continuous costs, such as concessionary fares and socially necessary bus services. KCC and MBC receive most of their revenue funding for transport through

the wider Formula Grant paid to local authorities by Government and through council tax, although a significant proportion is also secured through parking revenues.

E5.4 The New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a recently introduced Government funding stream which aims to incentivise housing growth by match funding the additional council tax raised from new homes and empty properties brought back into use for the following six years. This can also be used to fund new, or improve transport infrastructure however it must be noted that this funding is not exclusively for transport and can be spent elsewhere if the need dictates.

E6.0 How will we monitor progress of the ITS?

E6.1 The strategy includes a Performance Monitoring Plan that will measure progress against set targets and indicators. These targets are realistic but ambitious and are designed to achieve the vision and objectives of the ITS.

Introduction

1.0 Transport: Part of the Wider Picture

1.0.1 Maidstone Borough faces acute transport challenges, from managing traffic congestion to the growing impacts of climate change. Maidstone's Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) will address these issues through a range of policies and actions for the Borough Council and its partners to implement. The primary goal for the ITS is to help realise the borough's vision for 2026 captured in the Maidstone Core Strategy of having:

> *"A prosperous and vibrant future for Maidstone's urban and rural communities whilst retaining and enhancing the borough's distinctive heritage, landscape and character...*
>
> *By 2026 prosperity will be achieved through sustainable economic growth across the borough supported by the creation of high quality employment opportunities, the regeneration of key sites, continued investment in the Town Centre and improvements to access...There will be an emphasis on sustainable transport access improvements to the town centre and across the borough through an integrated approach to transport strategy to promote the role of Maidstone as a transport hub with national and regional links. Measures will be sought to achieve the behavioural change that will be required to support the introduction of an integrated approach to sustainable transport solutions....."*

1.0.2 The ITS is written in the context of national and local policies and objectives including the Local Transport Plan for Kent[1] and Growth without Gridlock[2] both prepared by Kent County Council (KCC).

1.0.3 Although the ITS will address the problem of existing traffic congestion, its primary aim is to provide for the necessary transport infrastructure to support the development aspirations of the Core Strategy. In doing so, it will address the issues

[1] KCC (2011) *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16*

[2] KCC (2010) *Growth without Gridlock – A Transport Delivery Plan for Kent*

associated with each transport mode in a holistic way. This strategy adopts an integrated approach which recognises that transport issues are inherently linked to one another, but that they are also part of the wider planning challenge.

1.0.4 Drafted by MBC and KCC in partnership, the ITS will look at how we can begin to encourage a shift in travel behaviour away from the majority of trips being taken by private car – with its particular economic, social and environmental costs - towards using more sustainable modes of transport where appropriate.

1.1 Growth for the Future

1.1.1 Maidstone's proposed Core Strategy provides for 10,080 new homes together with employment growth within the borough by 2026. Approximately 80% of this growth will be accommodated in the Maidstone Urban Area with the remaining 20% provided in the Rural Service Centres of Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham. Approximately 880 new homes are proposed for the north-west of the urban area with 1075 homes proposed for the south-east. The majority of the remainder are to be provided through existing or proposed planning permissions in the existing built up areas with approximately 1130 new homes spread across the Rural Service Centres (RSCs). In addition, commercial development of 18ha at M20 Junction 8 and a medical campus with replacement retail facilities at M20 Junction 7. Limited further employment floorspace will be provided at the Rural Service Centres and at the urban periphery.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

1.2.1 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) is the Local Planning Authority for the borough and also has delegated responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004, Park and Ride services, street cleaning, the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles, the provision of bus shelters and the monitoring of air quality. Kent County Council (KCC) is the local highway authority for Kent and is responsible for the management and maintenance of all adopted roads in the county other than motorways and trunk roads. KCC is also the local

transport authority for Kent and actively promotes alternatives to car-based travel to improve the accessibility, sustainability and efficiency of the highway network. The ITS has therefore been jointly prepared by MBC and KCC.

1.2.2 Motorways and trunk roads in England are the responsibility of the Highways Agency (HA), which has been actively involved in the development of the ITS.

1.2.3 MBC and KCC have also consulted local bus operators during the development of the ITS. Approximately 80% of bus services in Kent are operated on a wholly commercial basis by these companies and neither the Borough nor County Councils play a direct role in their provision. However, MBC and KCC have signed a Quality Bus Partnership Agreement with the borough's principal commercial bus operator, Arriva, which commits all parties to invest jointly in local bus services and supporting infrastructure. The remaining 20% of services are classified as 'socially necessary' and are procured by KCC to provide access to essential services.

1.2.4 Maidstone's rail services are operated as part of the South Eastern Franchise, which is specified and led by the Department for Transport (DfT). The franchise is currently held by Southeastern. MBC and KCC are closely involved in the specification of DfT franchise contracts and frequently lobby central Government and Southeastern for improvements to rail services.

Policy Context

2.0 Policy Relationship

2.0.1 The ITS is influenced by and interacts with a range of national and local policies and strategies. These include the *National Planning Policy Framework; Vision for Kent 2012-2022; Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020; Growth without Gridlock: a Transport Delivery Plan for Kent; Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16; Countryside Access Improvement Plan; Rail Action Plan for Kent;* and the *Maidstone Air Quality Action Plan*.

2.0.2 This chapter briefly outlines the current policy context within which the ITS has been developed and identifies how it can contribute to the delivery of their key objectives.

2.1 National Policy

2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2012)[3]

2.1.2 The Department for Transport (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".*

2.1.3 This vision has been carried forward into the Government's new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which has replaced the previous suite of Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance notes and certain Circulars. The NPPF 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 the growth of ports, airports and other major generators of travel demand.

2.1.4 The NPPF recommends that Transport Assessments and Travel Plans should accompany applications for developments that generate significant amounts of movement, although it

[3] Department for Communities and Local Government (2012), *National Planning Policy Framework*

recognises that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. Paragraph 32 sets out three tests that development plans and decisions should take account of. These are whether:-

a) The opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;

b) Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and

c) Improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the impacts of development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

2.1.5 The wording of the third test is already proving contentious between local authorities and developers, as 'residual cumulative impacts of development' are not clearly defined by the NPPF, although they are widely defined as those impacts that remain following the implementation of mitigation measures. Whilst some are of the opinion that they embrace all development impacts, including those related to highway safety, others argue that they relate only to a development's impact on traffic flows and/or congestion. This matter is likely to be the subject of numerous test cases over the coming months. Nevertheless, KCC Highways and Transportation is currently of the view that, as sustainable transport and highway safety matters are the subject of separate tests in Paragraph 32, local authorities should continue to apply more stringent criteria in assessing a development's impact on highway safety than when assessing its impact on traffic flows. Indeed, congestion in town centres such as Maidstone is often the sign of a successful local economy and it may be unreasonable to require developers to fully mitigate it where the costs involved in doing so would make an otherwise acceptable and beneficial development unviable.

2.2 Local Policy

2.2.1 Vision for Kent 2012-2022 (2012)[4]

2.2.2 The Vision for Kent is a countywide strategy for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent's communities. It has been written around three major ambitions, which are to:-

a) **Grow the economy** by supporting businesses to be successful, including improvements to the transport network and the provision of high-speed broadband;

b) **Tackle disadvantage** by fostering aspiration rather than dependency, including the provision of comprehensive, reliable and affordable public transport services providing access to education and employment opportunities; and

c) **Put the citizen in control** by involving people in making decisions and working with them to design services that meet their needs and suit them, including the continued provision of KCC's Member Highway Fund and support for community bus and rail schemes.

2.2.3 The Vision for Kent has been endorsed by the Kent Forum, which is made up of the elected leaders of Kent's 13 councils (KCC and the 12 District and Borough Councils), the Chairman of the Fire Authority and – from November 2012 – the county's Police Commissioner. Supporting the Kent Forum is the Joint Kent Chiefs, which comprises the Chief Executives of Kent's councils and Primary Care Trusts, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer. Ambition Boards, reporting to the Joint Kent Chiefs, will oversee the achievement of the three ambitions, with Locality Boards (including the Maidstone Locality Board), involving representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, delivering the ambitions at a local level.

2.2.4 Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020 (2009)[5]

[4] Kent Forum (2012), *Vision for Kent 2012-2022*

[5] MBC (2009), *The Sustainable Community Strategy for Maidstone Borough 2009-2020*

2.2.5 MBC's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for Maidstone in a way which respects the need for sustainable development. The SCS acknowledges that congestion in the borough has become an increasing problem and that the overriding aim of an integrated transport strategy must be to provide genuine transport choice to the area's residents, businesses and visitors. These driving principles are reflected in the first two objectives of the SCS, which are to:-

a) Develop a vibrant economy, create prosperity and opportunities for all;

b) Develop an efficient, sustainable, integrated transport system.

2.2.6 The SCS identifies a range of transport-related targets which will contribute towards the achievement of these objectives – and which are reflected in the ITS – including those to:-

a) Prevent congestion levels from rising;

b) Seek an annual reduction in the rate of children taken to school by car;

c) Increase the number of journeys taken out of cars by Travel Plans;

d) Promote a long-term solution to the problems caused by Operation Stack;

e) Ensure 100% of new dwellings are within 400 metres of a bus service;

f) Lobby for improved rail services.

2.2.7 Growth without Gridlock: a Transport Delivery Plan for Kent (2010)[6]

2.2.8 *Growth without Gridlock* outlines KCC's high level vision for the transport network needed in Kent to support planned growth in housing and employment over the next 20 years. It responds to

[6] KCC (2010), *Growth without Gridlock – A Transport Delivery Plan for Kent*

the economic and regeneration pressures outlined in the County Council's Framework for Regeneration and identifies how transport interventions can contribute to their alleviation. The strategy requests greater transport funding and delivery powers for local transport authorities and calls upon the Government to progress those schemes of regional and national importance, including a Lower Thames Crossing, a long-term solution to Operation Stack and a scheme of Foreign Lorry Road User Charging. *Growth without Gridlock* also recognises the vital importance of integrating spatial and transport planning at a local level through the preparation of the five-year Local Transport Plan for Kent and integrated transport strategies to accompany local planning authorities' Core Strategies.

2.2.9 Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16 (2011)[7]

2.2.10 The preparation and submission of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory requirement of all local transport authorities in England outside London under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008). An LTP sets out the authority's policies and delivery plans for the management and improvement of the local transport network. KCC's strategic approach for Kent's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3), covering the period 2011 to 2016, was to develop five LTP3 Themes aligned to the previous government's national transport goals. These themes are:-

a) **Growth Without Gridlock** – covering the objectives of traffic management, unlocking regeneration and housing growth, improving access to jobs and services, and supporting the function of the county's international gateways;

b) **A Safer and Healthier County** – covering the objectives of safer roads, active travel, and a safe and secure network;

[7] KCC (2011), *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16*

c) **Supporting Independence** – covering the objectives of improving access to public transport, walking and cycling, particularly in disadvantaged areas;

d) **Tackling a Changing Climate** – covering the objectives of reducing emissions from transport and smarter travel; and

e) **Enjoying Life in Kent** – covering the objectives of improving access to learning, culture, social networks and the countryside, enhancing the journey experience, protecting Kent's natural and built environment, and providing for sociable streets.

2.2.11 The LTP3 Implementation Plan outlines KCC's approach to allocating the County Council's annual Integrated Transport Block allocation, which supports investment in small scale (i.e. under £5 million) transport schemes such as crash remedial measures, traffic management schemes, bus priority measures and improvements to walking and cycling routes. The first stage of the process allocates the Integrated Transport budget to the LTP3 themes, as illustrated below.

LTP3 Theme	Allocation
Growth Without Gridlock	45%
A Safer and Healthier County	15%
Supporting Independence	15%
Tackling a Changing Climate	15%
Enjoying Life in Kent	10%

2.2.12 Growth Without Gridlock is given the largest allocation primarily on account of the significant economic challenges facing Kent, in common with the rest of the UK, together with the local and sub-regional challenges associated with the substantial housing and

employment growth planned in Kent Thameside, Ashford, Dover and Maidstone.

2.2.13 The second stage of the budget allocation process distributes the funding under each of the LTP3 Themes to those areas of the county where the challenges associated with each theme are most acute, as illustrated below. Maidstone is eligible for funding under four of the five themes, which collectively account for 85% of KCC's annual Integrated Transport budget.

LTP3 Theme	Priority Area(s)
Growth Without Gridlock	Prioritise spending in the **Growth Areas** and **Growth Points** (Kent Thameside, Ashford, Dover and Maidstone) which will be the focus of housing and employment growth during the LTP3 period.
A Safer and Healthier County	Prioritise spending to tackle countywide **problem sites** including Air Quality Management Areas, crash cluster sites, and areas with high levels of health deprivation.
Supporting Independence	Prioritise spending in the **East Kent coastal towns** (from Herne Bay to the Romney Marsh) which exhibit high levels of unemployment, low car ownership and ageing populations.
Tackling a Changing Climate	Prioritise spending in the county's **urban areas**, particularly those with Air Quality Management Areas and congestion hotspots (principally Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Gravesend, Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells).

Enjoying Life in Kent	Mitigate the impact of motorised transport **across the county** in order to reduce the number of people exposed to heavy traffic, to enhance wellbeing and community cohesion and to improve access to the countryside and coast.

2.2.14 The LTP3 budget allocation and spatial distribution methodology enables KCC to attain best value from the limited funding available. Within this framework, the annual long list of Integrated Transport schemes developed by KCC Highways and Transportation in consultation with the county's district and borough councils, is prioritised using a value for money assessment, which takes into account aspects such as their contribution to the local transport strategy.

2.3 Other Plans and Strategies

2.3.1 In addition to the policies and strategies outlined above, the ITS is also aligned with a number of other local plans, including *KCC's Countryside Access Improvement Plan*[8] *and; Rail Action Plan for Kent*[9]*;* and *MBC's Air Quality Action Plan*[10]. The way in which these documents support the delivery of the ITS is considered in detail in forthcoming chapters.

[8] KCC (2007), *Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2007-2017*

[9] KCC (2011), *Rail Action Plan for Kent*

[10] MBC (2010), *Maidstone Town Air Quality Action Plan*

Transport Challenges

3.0 The Challenges

3.0.1 This chapter describes Maidstone Borough's existing transport network and the challenges the Borough faces. It identifies the key economic, social and/or environmental issues associated with each mode, together with the strengths and opportunities on which the ITS can build.

3.1 Local Context

3.1.1 Maidstone is a dynamic borough, set within both an urban and a rural context, which has a vital role to play in the significant growth expected in the South East over the next two decades. The borough currently has a population of 150,000, which is evenly split between the County Town and its rural hinterland, including the five Rural Service Centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst. Whilst the town's main function is as a centre for business, retail and administration, the rural economy is characterised by pockets of manufacturing, horticulture and farming.

3.1.2 Maidstone has been identified as a regionally important transport hub; however its transport network has come under increasing strain in recent years, principally on account of the configuration of its road and rail networks and the growing demand for travel generally. If the borough is to have an emphasis on sustainable transport access across the borough and accommodate the level of housing and employment growth envisaged by the Core Strategy a comprehensive and deliverable transport strategy must be in place to address these challenges.

3.2 Highway Network

3.2.1 Maidstone has an extensive highway network which provides direct links both within the borough and to neighbouring areas including Ashford, the Medway Towns, Tunbridge Wells and London. Four north-south and east-west 'A' roads pass through the town centre and numerous 'B' roads 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 (Fig 1).

3.2.2 The principal constraint on the borough's urban road network is the single crossing point of the River Medway at the town centre bridge 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, including the B2246 Hermitage Lane and B2163 Heath Road. Other peak time congestion hotspots include the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout at Allington, where cross-boundary journeys between Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling interact with longer-distance journeys between the A26 Tonbridge Road corridor and the M20 Junction 5 via Hermitage Lane. There is also a level of southbound congestion on the A229 at the Running Horse and Cobtree Roundabouts during the morning peak, as traffic from the Medway Towns attempts to join the westbound M20 at Junction 6. Similar problems are experienced at the M20 Junction 7 and are exacerbated during the afternoon peak by the significant volume of traffic exiting the westbound M20 and seeking to access South East Maidstone via the Bearsted Road Roundabout and New Cut Road, as drivers attempt to avoid the congestion in central Maidstone.

3.2.3 The 2007 traffic survey data used to develop the Maidstone transport model was collected at inner and outer cordon points around the town centre and urban area respectively (Fig 2). The data identified that the number of person trips (including those by car, bus and Park and Ride) made on the highway network during the morning peak hour totalled 38,000, equating to around 8,000 vehicles entering the inner cordon and 8,500 entering the outer cordon. Conversely, 5,000 vehicles exited the inner cordon and 7,000 exited the outer cordon during this period, indicating a high level of in-commuting[11]. These traffic flows are reflected in the average journey speeds on the busiest routes in the morning peak of around 21-22 kilometres per hour,

[11] Appendix A: Jacobs (2012) *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012*

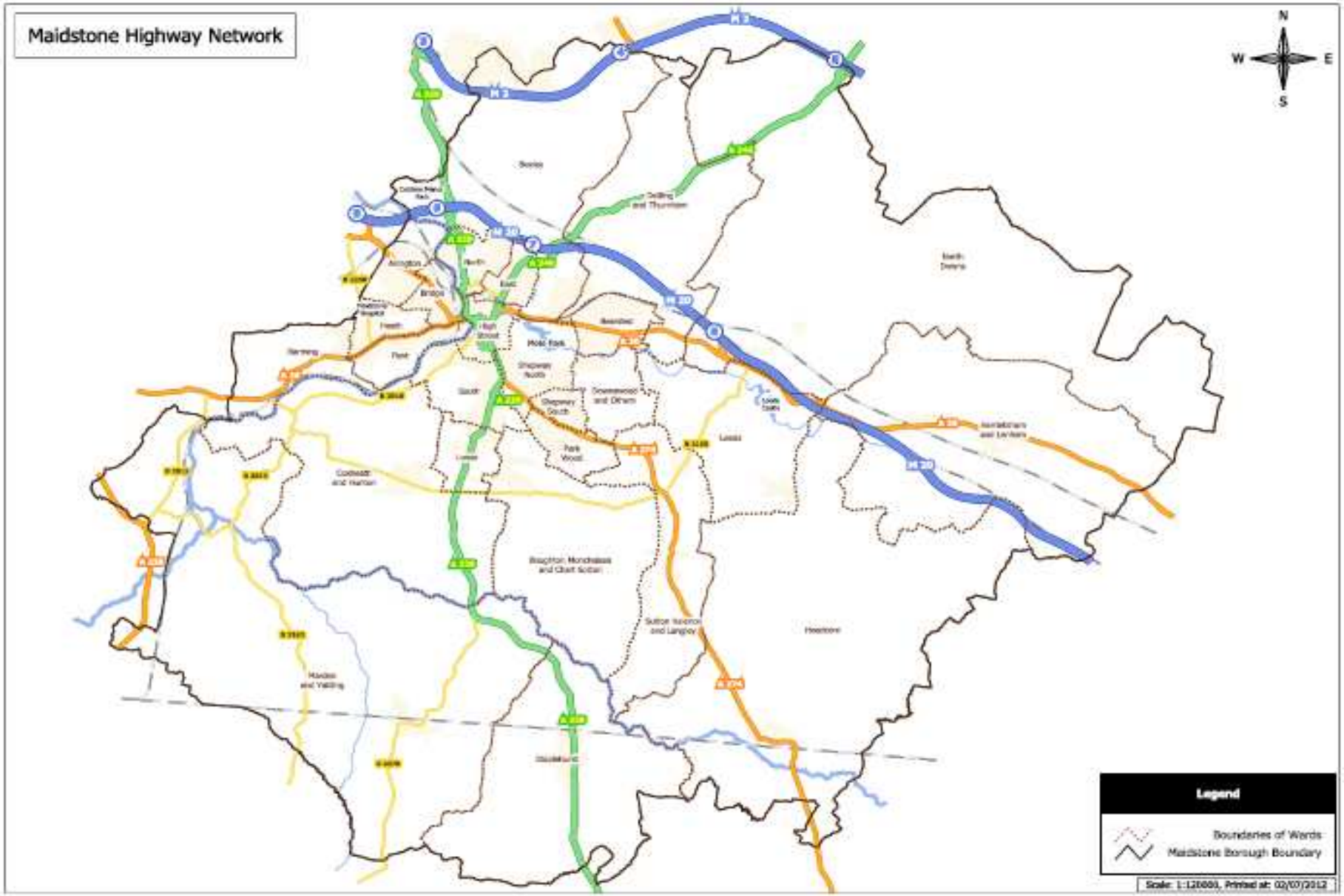

Figure 1: Maidstone Highway Network

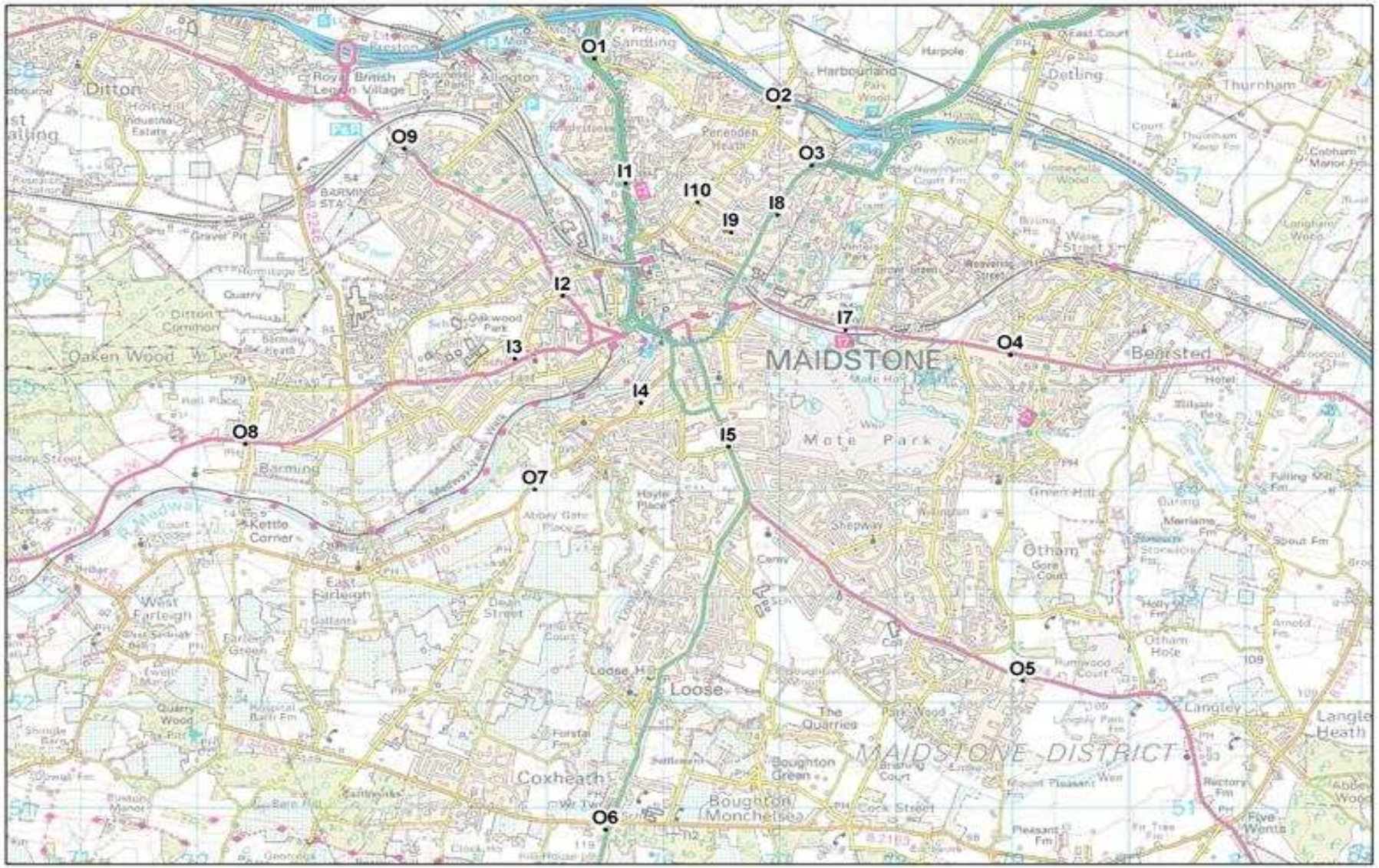

Figure 2: Inner and Outer Cordon Link Flow Locations

equating to an average journey time between the outer cordon and the town centre of between 10 and 15 minutes.

3.2.4 The Maidstone transport model conducted in 2012 forecasts that by the end of the Core Strategy period in 2026, a 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 from 38,000 to 54,000 (or 21%). This could have the effect of increasing inbound morning peak travel times to between 15 and 28 minutes on the main arterial routes[12]. In this scenario, the level of connectivity across the borough would be significantly reduced and the impacts on the local economy, air quality and the general health and wellbeing of the population would be severe.

3.2.5 Congestion has also been identified as an issue on the M20 within Maidstone Borough. A volume to capacity ratio of 85% is considered the maximum acceptable limit by the Highways Agency[13] and the section of the M20 between Junctions 4 and 5 is already exceeding this threshold during the morning peak[14]. Volume to capacity ratios between Junctions 6 and 7 and Junctions 7 and 8 are also forecast to exceed 90% by 2026, which will have a negative impact on journey time reliability for long-distance traffic[15]. This issue is exacerbated by the widespread use of the M20 for local journeys during peak periods, as commuters seek to avoid the congestion on the main arterial routes into Maidstone.

3.2.6 The survey work undertaken to inform the Maidstone transport model confirmed that, contrary to popular perception, the majority of traffic entering the urban area at peak times is heading for destinations within the town itself, including the town centre, the secondary schools and the Hospital. The relative proportions for the morning peak hour (8am to 9am) are illustrated in Figure 3 and the table below.

[12] Appendix A: Jacobs (2012) *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012*

[13] Department for Transport, *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*

[14] Appendix A: Jacobs (2012) *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012*

[15] Appendix A: Jacobs (2012) *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012*

Figure 3: Predicted traffic congestion during the morning peak 2026

Approach (cordon point)	% to Maidstone Urban Area	% Through Traffic
A229 Royal Engineers Way (south of M20 Junction 6)	97%	3%
A229 Sittingbourne Road (south of M20 Junction 7)	91%	3%
A20 Ashford Road(west of M20 Junction 8)	96%	4%
A274 Sutton Road (east of Langley)	87%	13%
A229 Linton Hill (south of B2163 junction)	99%	1%
A26 Tonbridge Road(east of North Lane, Barming)	99%	1%
A20 London Road (east of M20 Junction 5)	98%	2%
Total	**97%**	**3%**

3.2.7 Maidstone has average vehicle occupancy of approximately 1.23 persons per car, lower than the UK average of 1.6 persons per car[16]. This results in an inefficient use of road space and hence greater traffic congestion. 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; particularly the more rural areas of the borough, the traffic surveys suggest that the ITS should focus on traffic 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 car-based trips into Maidstone town centre during

[16] DfT (2011) *Personal Travel Factsheet Commuting and Business Travel*

peak periods, which can be achieved through interventions such as Park and Ride. This would improve the reliability and hence attractiveness of public transport, as well as providing businesses and freight operators with greater journey time reliability[17].

3.3 Urban Traffic Management and Control System

3.3.1 The primary route network in Maidstone town centre is covered by KCC's Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system. This proactively coordinates and optimises traffic signal timings according to the prevailing conditions to make the highway network run as efficiently as possible. It also allows for direct intervention by the County Council's Traffic Management Centre operators to respond in real time to unexpected incidents such as vehicle breakdowns and accidents. Information about car park occupancies, journey times (based on data captured from Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras) and incidents can be communicated direct to drivers through a cordon of Variable Message Signs and the system also provides Real Time Passenger Information to bus stops. The UTMC system has been credited with reducing average journey times on Maidstone's highway network by over 10% since 2006.

3.4 Parking

3.4.1 The provision of an adequate supply of well-located and reasonably priced car parking is essential to support the borough's retail economy, to provide a means of 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

[17] Appendix B: JMP (2012) *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research, Option Appraisal Report, April 2012*

an overprovision of parking, particularly in and around Maidstone town centre.

3.4.2 The Borough Council currently manages 12 residents' parking zones (Fig 4), primarily covering the streets surrounding the town centre, for which approximately 7,600 parking permits have been issued to date. The Residents' Parking Scheme was introduced to prevent drivers from outside of the town using these streets as free-all day parking areas, which had been the source of considerable inconvenience to residents and their visitors. Commuters have instead been encouraged to use the Park and Ride service. Nevertheless, the number of permits issued is now approaching the number of parking spaces available and six of the residents' parking zones are approaching 90% capacity during evening hours[18].

3.4.3 There are 17 MBC-owned car parks in Maidstone town centre providing 1,600 publically accessible off-street spaces. Of these, approximately 430 are short stay only and 1,200 are long or short stay spaces. Short stay parking is considered to be any length of stay of less than four hours and hence is primarily used by shoppers – who largely access the town centre during off-peak periods – rather than commuters, who make a significant contribution to peak time congestion. The most recent occupational survey of MBC car parking was conducted in November 2011[19] and found that off-street short and long stay parking in the town centre had an average occupancy of 71%, leaving approximately 125 short stay only and 350 short or long stay spaces unoccupied on average per day.

3.4.4 In addition to Council-owned car parks, there are up to a further 8,000 privately owned parking spaces associated with existing office, retail and leisure uses in the town centre. This includes publically accessible spaces at The Mall Chequers (1,000 spaces), Fremlins Walk (760 spaces) and Sainsbury's (370 spaces) with the remainder being only privately accessible. A 'snapshot' survey conducted in 2010 found that approximately 4,100 in the town centre were non-retail spaces, a third of which

[18] Appendix C: MBC (2010) *Resident Parking Scheme Survey Report*

[19] Appendix D: JMP (2011) *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research, Data Report, December 2011*

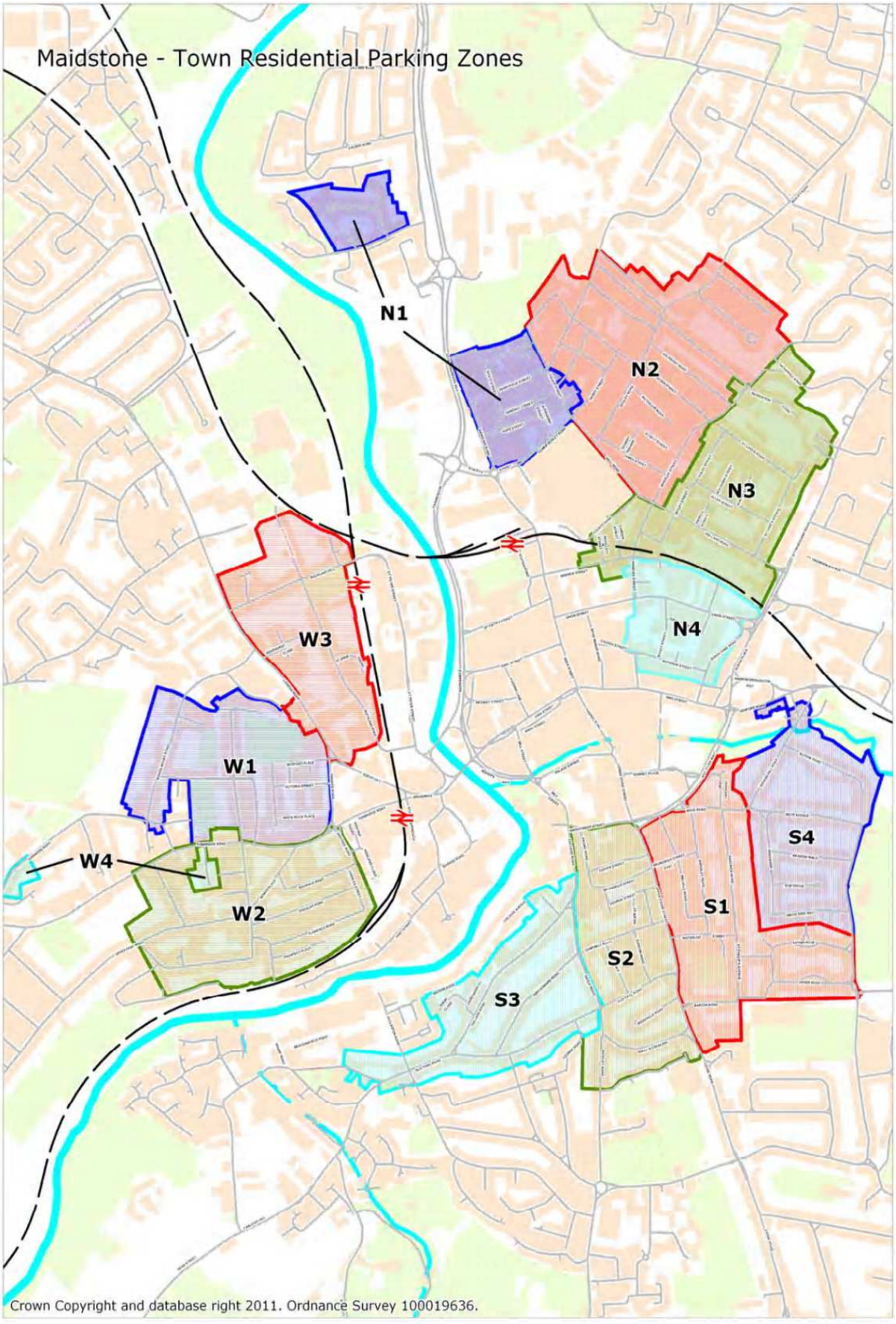

Figure 4: Maidstone Residential Parking Zones

were not occupied[20]. However it must also be noted that this can be partly explained by the significant amount of vacant office space that currently exists within the town.

3.4.5 By national comparison for towns of similar circumstances to Maidstone, parking tariffs in Maidstone are low for both short and long stay parking[21]. The tariffs in MBC-owned car parks are also lower on average than those in the privately-owned commercial car parks. The most noticeable price differential relates to long stay parking, which is charged at £4.50 for four or more hours in MBC car parks and £8.50 in privately-owned car parks. This presents the Borough Council with an opportunity to increase long stay parking charges in the car parks under its control to assist in managing the forecast growth of peak time traffic.

3.4.6 KCC currently applies the parking standards set out in the *Kent Design Guide: Interim Guidance Note 3*[22] for residential developments and the *Kent and Medway Structure Plan: Supplementary Planning Guidance 4*[23] for commercial developments. Government policy no longer requires local authorities to set maximum parking standards[24]; instead, they are encouraged to develop locally appropriate standards taking into account factors such as the availability of public transport and local car ownership levels. MBC's proposed parking standards, which will reflect consideration of all of the issues identified above, will be the subject of a forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document.

3.5 Park and Ride

3.5.1 MBC has been operating Park and Ride services in Maidstone since the early 1980s to address the growing peak time congestion in the town centre and these have met with varying

[20] Appendix E: MBC (2010), *Private Spaces Attached to Commercial Premises, Oct 2010*

[21] Appendix F: MBC (2011), *MBC Town Centre Parking Tariffs 2011*

[22] KCC (2008), *Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3 Residential Parking*

[23] KCC (2006), *Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006: Supplementary Planning Guidance 4 – Kent Vehicle Parking Standards*

[24] National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

levels of success to date. Three sites are currently in operation at London Road (500 spaces), Sittingbourne Road (600 spaces) and Willington Street (400 spaces). A fourth site, Coombe Quarry, was closed in 2007 due to falling patronage. In the financial year 2008/09, 516,000 transactions were recorded on Park and Ride bus services, falling by 17% to 429,000 transactions in 2011/12[25]. The Park and Ride services are also available for use by concessionary pass holders, and indeed approximately half of the trips recorded in 2009/10 were made by this group; however these journeys are wholly subsidised by KCC.

3.5.2 The recent reduction in patronage may be partly explained by the onset of the recession and suppressed economic activity in the town centre. Patronage of the Park and Ride service must also be considered in the context of the supply of town centre car parking (both public and private) and the comparatively low cost of long stay parking tariffs, as discussed above. Nevertheless, the current annual subsidy requirement for the service of approximately £400,000 is a significant concern for the Borough Council at a time of falling public sector funding. This figure includes a large sum for rental of the Sittingbourne Road site.

3.5.3 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[26], compared to 12% for bus and 77% for private car[27]. If it is to fulfil its potential as an integral part of the borough's traffic management strategy, it must be better utilised to target an increasing share of commuters.

3.5.4 Another important constraint on the development of the service is the fact that it is currently charged for on a 'per passenger' rather than 'per car' basis. This discourages its use by car sharers, for whom it is often more cost effective to pay the long stay parking tariff in the town centre. Canterbury City Council already charges on a 'per car' basis for its successful Park and Ride operation, which not only attracts multiple occupancy car trips to the service

[25] MBC (2012) Data extraction from MBC Parking Services

[26] Excluding walking and cycling

[27] Appendix A: Jacobs (2012) *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012*

but also yields a payment from concessionary pass holders. However this policy has VAT implications which require thorough investigation by MBC.

3.6 Air Quality

3.6.1 MBC has a statutory duty to undertake local air quality management under the Environment Act 1995, including the conduct of regular reviews and assessments. Where it is found that the objectives set out in the national Air Quality Strategy are unlikely to be met, it must designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to tackle the problem and produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures that will be taken to reduce pollution levels. Monitoring carried out by the Borough Council[28] has previously identified areas of exceedence of acceptable Nitrogen Dioxide levels within the town and in 2008 it declared the entire built up area of Maidstone, together with Junctions 6 to 7 of the M20, as an AQMA.

3.6.2 The AQMA is primarily related to road traffic emissions; therefore it is vital that the ITS is aligned with MBC's AQAP. The principle aim of the AQAP is to minimise the effects of air pollution on human health using all reasonable means. It includes a range of measures to reduce emissions at various 'hotspots' around the town, including the six areas that exceed the Nitrogen Dioxide Annual Objective of 40 micrograms per kilogram:-

- Town Centre (including High Street and Upper Stone Street);
- A229 Loose Road / A274 Sutton Road (Wheatsheaf) junction;
- A26 Tonbridge Road / Fountain Lane junction;
- Well Road / Boxley Road junction;
- M20 Junctions 6 to 7; and
- Forstal Road.

[28] MBC (2010), *Maidstone Town Air Quality Action Plan*

3.6.3 The Upper Stone Street and Wheatsheaf sections of the A229 require the greatest reductions in Nitrogen Dioxide and are under investigation for hourly exceedence of the EU Objective.

3.7 Climate Change

3.7.1 It is now generally accepted that human-induced climate change is having a detrimental impact on the global environment. It is caused by the cumulative effect of excess carbon dioxide trapping heat in the atmosphere, which has prompted a significant shift in the Earth's weather patterns[29]. A large percentage of this excess carbon dioxide is derived from vehicle exhausts, which further underlines the importance of transport policies promoting cleaner fuels and modal shift. The Department of Energy and Climate Change has stated that action by local authorities will be critical to the achievement of the legally binding carbon dioxide reduction targets set out in the Climate Change Act – which stipulates a 34% reduction in emissions by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050 from a 1990 baseline – as through their powers and responsibilities, including those for land-use planning and local transport, they can have a significant influence over emissions in their area.

3.7.2 In 2008, MBC adopted a 3% annual carbon dioxide reduction target for its own operations[30], with the aim of cutting emissions from its buildings and vehicles by 20% by 2015 and over 30% by 2020. KCC has also sought to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2015[31]. Additionally, MBC is a member of the Low Emissions Strategies Partnership, which provides a package of measures to accelerate the uptake of cleaner fuels and technologies in and around new development, thereby complementing other mitigation measures such as travel planning and public transport infrastructure.

3.8 Road Safety

[29] KCC (2010) *Climate Change – A guide for Kent's decision makers*

[30] MBC (2011) *Maidstone Carbon Management Plan 2011*

[31] KCC (2010), *The Kent Environment Strategy 2010-13*

3.8.1 The safety of road users is of paramount importance to both the Borough and County Councils. However, although the total number of injury accidents has reduced significantly throughout the county over the last 10 years[32], the number of crashes involving death or serious injury in Maidstone Borough has been consistently above the Kent District average[33]. This is partly attributable to the large urban population and busy road network. Nevertheless, there are specific areas of concern, both in terms of the concentration of crashes at certain locations and the category of road users involved, including 17 to 24 year old car drivers, motorcyclists and pedestrians.

3.8.2 Of the 20 'crash cluster sites' in Kent with the highest number of crashes in the period 2007 to 2010, five are in Maidstone Borough, namely:-

- A229 Running Horse Roundabout;
- A229 Mill Street / Palace Avenue;
- A229 Royal Engineers Road Roundabout;
- A20 Broadway (North of St Peters Street); and
- A20 Ashford Road / King Street.

3.8.3 Inevitably, these locations are also those with some of the highest traffic volumes and most complex vehicle manoeuvres in the county.

3.8.4 KCC has a statutory duty to record injury crash data from Police records and to take any appropriate remedial action. Its road safety education programme targets vulnerable road users in particular, including children and motorcyclists, while enforcement is carried out by Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership. Schemes to tackle identifiable patterns of crashes at specific locations are drawn up and promoted through the Local Transport Plan and are reported to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board.

[32] KCC (2011), *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16*

[33] Kent Police (2012) Killed and Seriously Injured Surveys and Data Extraction

3.9 Rail

3.9.1 Three railway lines cross Maidstone Borough, serving a total of 14 stations (Fig 5). The operator of the vast majority of rail services in the area is the South Eastern Franchise holder, Southeastern. The franchise was let by the Department for Transport in 2006 for an initial six year period, which has subsequently been extended by an additional two years to March 2014.

3.9.2 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 one hour. In December 2009, the shoulder-peak services from Maidstone East to London Charing Cross and Cannon Street were replaced by the present half-hourly service to Victoria. This has led to the loss of direct rail services between Maidstone and the City of London, prompting many commuters to travel by road to stations in Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling and Sevenoaks which have retained these services.

3.9.3 The London Charing Cross/Cannon Street to Dover and 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.

3.9.4 The Medway Valley Line, connecting Strood and Paddock Wood, runs from north to south across the borough, including 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 successfully 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 improvements have contributed to a

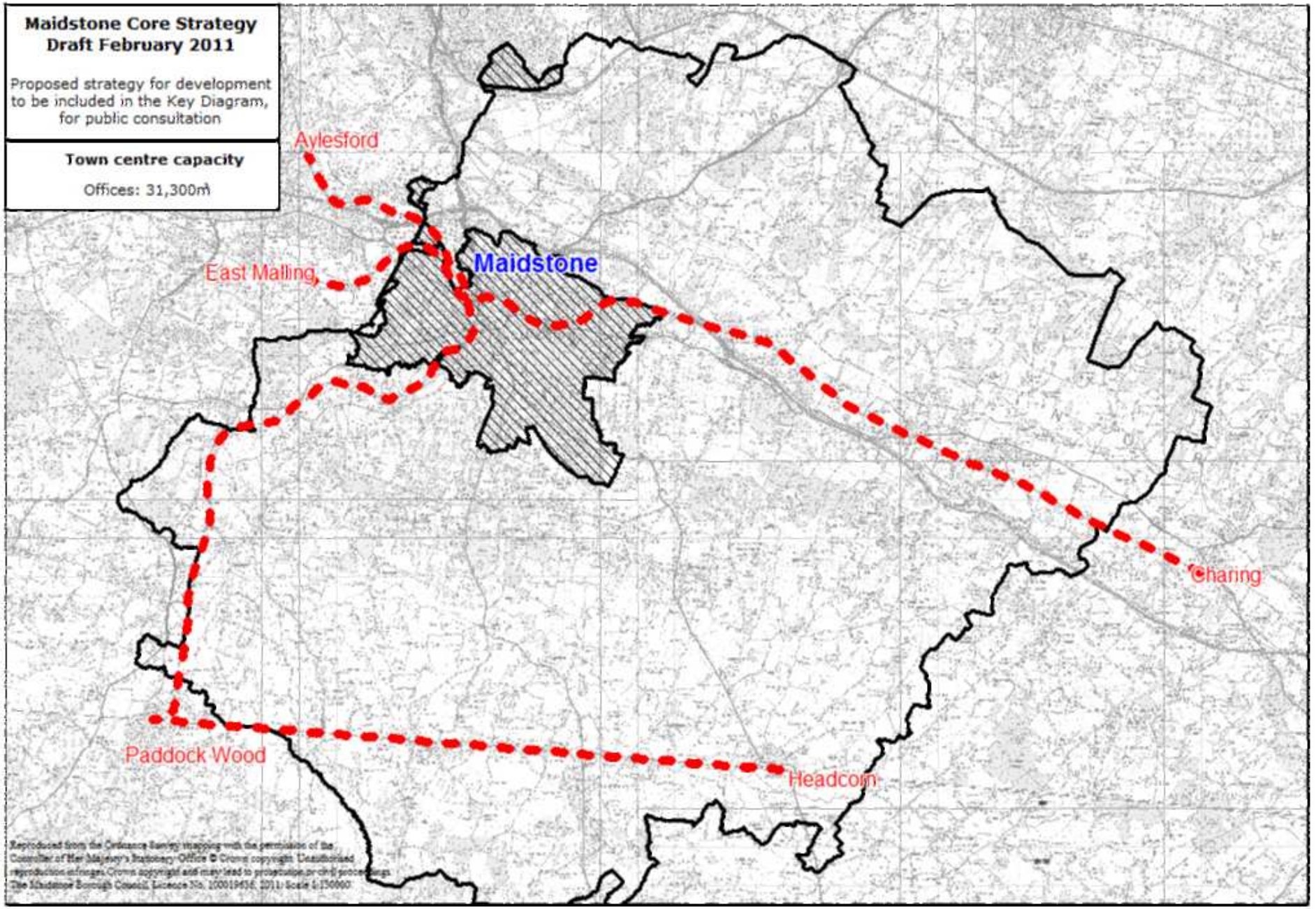

Figure 5: Maidstone Rail Services

25% increase in passenger numbers on the Medway Valley Line since 2007[34], putting it in the top 10 lines nationally for ridership growth according to the Association of Train Operating Companies.

3.9.5 KCC published the Rail Action Plan for Kent in 2011 setting out the County Council's objectives for the new South Eastern Franchise, which is due to commence in April 2014. 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 the London Oyster card[35].

3.10 Bus

3.10.1 Experience across the UK has shown that bus services of sufficient quality and frequency have the potential to capture a significant proportion of short- and medium-distance trips and to make a strong contribution to the alleviation of peak-time congestion in urban areas. Maidstone 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 estates and longer distance services providing connections to many of the outlying villages and neighbouring towns, including Ashford, Sittingbourne, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and the Medway Towns.

3.10.2 Approximately 80% of bus services in Maidstone Borough are operated on a wholly commercial basis. The remainder cannot be provided commercially and are classed as socially necessary services that require subsidy from KCC. They primarily consist of school, rural, evening and weekend services. The County Council has a clearly established policy for the financial support of socially necessary public transport services. This states that the service should provide access to education, employment, healthcare, or

[34] http://www.atoc.org/media-centre/latest-press-releases/many-small-rural-lines-see-resurgence-in-popularity-100613

[35] KCC (2011), *Rail Action Plan for Kent*

essential food shopping which could not otherwise be attained and that the cost of the service should not exceed £3 per passenger journey.

3.10.3 Some of the smaller rural settlements in Maidstone have no conventional bus service. However, these areas benefit from KCC's 'Kent Karrier' service, which provides a combination of demand-responsive and fixed routes for disabled people and those who live more than 500 metres from an established bus route. Due to the significant financial constraints facing the County Council, as well as rising tender prices, socially necessary services – like all non-statutory KCC functions – are currently under review. These routes will be retained in their current form wherever possible; however there is clearly scope for community-based solutions to play a greater role in the public transport network. KCC has already supported Lenham and Stockbury Parish Councils to establish community minibus schemes and is prepared to investigate the feasibility of similar schemes in other rural communities as funds allow.

3.10.4 Although KCC and MBC do not directly influence the provision of commercial bus services, both authorities work closely with the bus operators to improve the quality of services and to ensure that the highway network is planned and managed in a way that facilitates the passage 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.

3.10.5 KCC 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 for an annual fee of £100 for young people living in the county and in academic years 7 to 11. This innovative scheme has achieved national recognition and resulted in a significant increase in bus passenger journeys by young people. There is evidence of a 2.6% improvement in journey times outside schools[36] with a high take-up of passes – which is of particular benefit in major education centres such as Maidstone – and there are clear social inclusion benefits for

[36] KCC (2011), *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16*

young people. The scheme receives substantial revenue support from KCC, which amounted to over £10 million net in 2010/11 and options are under consideration for the continuing support of the scheme.

3.10.6 The County Council 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. The scheme currently entitles all pass holders to free bus travel between 0930 and 2300 on Monday to Friday, and at any time on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The Scheme has significantly improved access to essential services for older people and the disabled and supports independent living for those who might otherwise be unable to access the public transport network.

3.10.7 As the Local Education Authority, KCC also provides free or subsidised home-to-school transport to children who attend the 'nearest appropriate school for transport purposes', live more than two miles from the school using the shortest available walking route (if they are under eight years old), or live more than three miles from the school using the shortest available walking route (if they are over eight years old). The County Council makes further provision, such as escorts, if this is necessary to ensure school attendance. The statutory home to school transport service will continue during the period of the ITS and KCC will continue to ensure that it is integrated with rural and social services transport wherever possible.

3.11 Taxis

3.11.1 Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) can assist in tackling congestion and encourage sustainable travel by reducing the need for car ownership. They can also play an important role in providing access to services for rural residents and those who are unable to use conventional bus services. Maidstone town centre's main taxi ranks are located on the High Street and at Maidstone East and West stations. The recently completed public realm enhancement scheme has allowed for direct taxi access to the top of the High Street from the A229 Fairmeadow (a route previously only permissible for buses); thereby avoiding the circuitous route

via Earl Street. However, there is a need for the taxi ranks at the two railway stations to be similarly improved as part of any future redevelopment of these sites.

3.12 Walking and Public Realm

3.12.1 Nationally, the number of trips made by foot has declined by 24% between 1995 and 2008, from 292 to 221 trips per person per year[37]. In Maidstone town centre, levels of walking appear to have fluctuated in recent years. KCC counts of pedestrian movements across the town's inner cordon during a single 12-hour period indicated a fall of 2% between 2006 and 2008, followed by an increase of 9.6% in 2009 and a further fall of 6.8% in 2010. It should be noted in this respect that pedestrian flows are highly sensitive to weather conditions. Nevertheless, both the County and Borough Councils recognise that attractive and accessible town centre streets can make a vital contribution to the regeneration of local communities by supporting businesses and retailers. To this end, high streets should be viewed not simply as market places but also as meeting places and venues for civic functions and performances.

3.12.2 One of the most important ways of making streets more attractive is to reduce the dominance of vehicles. This can be achieved by restricting traffic, slowing it down and making drivers more aware of other road users by changing the carriageway/pavement distinction to a 'shared space', where no user has priority. Ideally, people should be able to walk wherever they want to, by the most direct route, with as little conflict with traffic as possible. Unfortunately, the edges of Maidstone town centre can be a particularly hostile area for pedestrians in this respect. The gyratory system and River Medway often present themselves as barriers to pedestrians, who are presently required to traverse one of the two bridges and cross several lanes of traffic. A delicate balance must therefore be struck between the competing needs of maintaining capacity on the strategic road network and creating a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians.

[37] KCC (2011), *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16*

3.12.3 The recently completed Maidstone High Street Public Realm Project (Fig 6) has sought to incorporate all of the elements of good street design in improving how the High Street looks, feels and works. The scheme sees less road space given over to vehicles and incorporates high quality surfaces and a new public space outside the Town Hall. The wider pavements and new crossing points, including the shared space feature at the Week Street/Gabriel's Hill crossroads, make the street more pedestrian-friendly, whilst maintaining access for buses, taxis, loading vehicles and Blue Badge holders. It is hoped that the scheme will attract more shoppers and tourists and encourage them to relax and spend time in the area.

3.12.4 The rural parts of Maidstone Borough are an important part of its tourism 'offer'; yet it is also a valuable asset for existing residents to enjoy. Being able to access the countryside is important to health and wellbeing and the extensive network of rural lanes and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) act to facilitate this. The PRoW network accounts for 42% of Kent's highway network by length and is managed by KCC's Countryside Access Service. In 2007, the County Council published its Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP); a ten year strategy which sets out KCC's proposed approach to accommodating the present and future demands on the PRoW network. Amongst the priorities identified within the CAIP is improved maintenance of the network, greater off-road access for equestrians and cyclists, and the removal of limitations such as stiles[38].

3.13 Cycling

3.13.1 Undertaking a four mile commute to and from work by bicycle rather than by car reduces congestion, brings numerous health benefits and saves half a tonne of Carbon Dioxide a year[39]. Both KCC and MBC are therefore committed to

[38] KCC (2007), *Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2007-2017*

[39] KCC (2011), *Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16*

Figure 6: High Street Public Realm Scheme

the provision of a comprehensive cycle network for residents and visitors to Maidstone. 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, with the 12-hour (7am to 7pm) inner cordon counts in 2009 recording 718 cyclists compared to the 24-hour vehicle count of over 90,000 cars. This number of cycle movements represented an increase from previous years (567 in 2007 and 605 in 2008) but still accounted for less than 1% of the number of cars. The challenges and opportunities related to cycling, together with the County and Borough Councils' objectives for the development of the cycle network, are considered in detail in the Maidstone Cycling Strategy[40].

3.14 Travel Plans

3.14.1 A Travel Plan for a site or organisation is a package of measures and initiatives aimed at encouraging more sustainable travel, with an emphasis on reducing single occupancy car use. They are especially suitable for large employers with high levels of car commuting and business travel, where reducing car parking provision and incentivising walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing can both reduce their overheads and alleviate peak-time congestion. Aside from having their own corporate Travel Plans, KCC and MBC have a strong track record in securing Travel Plans for new developments. The County Council also has a very successful School Travel Plans team, which has supported the preparation and implementation of Travel Plans for the majority of schools in Maidstone Borough.

3.14.2 MBC is a founding member of the 'New Ways 2 Work' Partnership managed by KCC. The Partnership brings together public and private sector organisations on a voluntary and informal basis to assist with the delivery of quality Workplace Travel Plans that are good for businesses, good for their employees and good for the

[40] Appendix G: MBC (2012) *Maidstone Cycling Strategy*

environment through practical solutions aimed at resolving the real and perceived obstacles to sustainable commuting. KCC also promotes membership of the kentcarshare website which links drivers and passengers who make similar journeys and encourages them to share their trip. Travel Plans are managed using the County Council's iTRACE system, which creates a database through which targets for individual sites can be regularly monitored and developers can be encouraged to fulfil their conditions. Inevitably, the resources available to KCC and MBC for these activities has reduced in recent years; therefore both Councils will increasingly seek to secure sustainable travel improvements and incentives at the commencement of new development, to lock in the benefits at the outset.

3.15 Freight and Operation Stack

3.15.1 The road haulage industry is crucial to the efficient functioning of the local and national economy. However, Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic has been identified as having an impact on the main routes between Maidstone town centre and the Rural Service Centres to the south of the borough. Indeed, the only permitted route for HGV traffic seeking to access Headcorn, Marden and Staplehurst from the M20 is the A229 through the town. Whilst this serves to exacerbate the congestion, safety and air quality issues associated with the Maidstone gyratory system, it is recognised that the principal alternative route – the B2163 through the villages of Leeds and Langley – is wholly unsuitable for HGVs and hence is subject to a weight restriction. There is nevertheless scope for KCC and MBC to work more closely in partnership with the road haulage industry to agree suitable lorry route networks, to concentrate deliveries outside of peak periods where possible and to reduce the environmental impact of freight. The *Freight Action Plan for Kent 2012 – 16* is primarily aimed at dealing with these issues and is also tasked with finding a long-term solution to Operation Stack (see below).

3.15.2 Operation Stack comes into effect when cross-Channel traffic is disrupted by the weather, mechanical problems or industrial action. The procedure, which is managed by Kent Police, involves closing sections of the M20 and using them to park HGVs until they can be accommodated on ferry and/or Channel Tunnel

services. Stage 2 of Operation Stack requires the closure of the eastbound M20 between Junctions 8 and 9, with non-HGV traffic being diverted on to the A20. This can result in long delays on both the motorway and the local road network through Maidstone, which has a profound impact on the local economy. KCC has identified a site for a large off-carriageway lorry park to accommodate Operation Stack traffic at Aldington, between Junctions 10 and 11 of the M20; however there is as yet no confirmed source of funding for this. Nevertheless, the County Council has welcomed the Government's commitment to introduce a scheme of Lorry Road User Charging during this Parliament, which will level the playing field for UK hauliers vis-à-vis their foreign counterparts, and is lobbying the Department for Transport to apportion part of the revenue raised to deliver the Operation Stack lorry park.

3.16 Relationship with other Authorities

3.16.1 It is vital that MBC and KCC carefully consider the potential impacts of the housing and employment growth proposed for Maidstone on the wider sub-region, particularly in respect of transport. The growth aspirations of neighbouring authorities will also have an impact on Maidstone's transport network which must be quantified as far as possible. Special Workplace Statistics data collected in 2001 showed that the primary destination for out-of-district trips was Tonbridge and Malling, with over 4,400 trips per day. Of these, some 82% were made by car[41]. This was followed by Medway, which attracted 2,000 trips per day; 90% of which were made by car. It should be noted, however, that the high-frequency Route 101 bus service between Maidstone and the Medway Towns has been substantially upgraded in recent years and now captures a significant proportion of commuter trips. Tonbridge and Malling and Medway also generate the largest numbers of trips to Maidstone, at 5,700 (75% by car) and 4,100 (81% by car) respectively.

3.16.2 There is particularly strong interaction between Maidstone and the Medway Valley settlements in Tonbridge and Malling via the

[41] Office for National Statistics (2001) *2001 Census: Special Workplace Statistics*

M20/A20 corridor, which suffers from severe peak-time congestion and includes five AQMAs. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council adopted its Local Development Framework Core Strategy in 2007 and there are existing and planned major development sites at Kings Hill, Leybourne Chase (West Malling), Holborough Valley and Peters Pit (north and north east of Snodland respectively). As the development of these sites continues, the M20 and A20 between Leybourne and Maidstone will come under increasing pressure as the County Town is likely to act as the primary education, employment and retail centre for their residents. Financial contributions have therefore been sought from the developers of these sites for improvements to sustainable transport provision on the A20 corridor and at West Malling Station to enhance the people-moving capacity of the network and discourage short-distance car trips on the M20.

3.16.3 Swale is part of the Thames Gateway Growth Area and already generates a significant number of peak-time trips to and from Maidstone, primarily via the A249. This places pressure on the capacity of M20 Junction 7, which in turn causes congestion on the southbound A249 in the morning peak. Bus services on the A249 corridor are relatively infrequent; however the Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site is well-positioned to capture a proportion of these trips. Lengthy inbound queues also form on the A26 Tonbridge Road as commuters from Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells access the town centre in the morning peak. Following the recent opening of the new Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury, the A26/A228 corridor has taken on greater strategic significance and the frequency of bus services between Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells have been increased accordingly.

3.16.4 KCC enjoys a close working relationship with the Highways Agency (HA) in managing the road network. The UTMC exchanges information with the HA’s traffic management system to provide drivers with coordinated journey information via Variable Message Signs and to enable the joint management of incidents. The M20 is a Controlled Motorway between Junctions 4 and 7, which enables the HA to set variable speed limits using overhead gantry signage according to the prevailing traffic conditions. This can assist in easing congestion and, in turn, restricting air pollution.

Transport Vision and Objectives

4.0 A Transport Vision for Maidstone

4.0.1 By 2026, Maidstone will have a transport network that supports a prosperous economy which is less reliant on the private car, and more proportionately shared among other travel modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The transport network will promote Maidstone town centre as a regionally important transport hub and will have sufficient people and goods moving capacity to support the growth projected by the Core Strategy for 2026. The borough will have a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and its air will be cleaner with more low carbon vehicles travelling on our roads. Both the borough's Rural Service Centres and Maidstone town centre will be better connected to facilities and employment within the borough. Strategic links to locations outside of the borough will be improved, and destinations such as London will be more accessible and convenient to travel to. Overall, Maidstone borough will be a better place to live with an enhanced quality of life supported by an improved transport network.

4.1 Transport Objectives

The transport objectives for the borough and how these will be achieved are as follows:

4.1.1 ***Objective 1: Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by Maidstone's Core Strategy and facilitates economic prosperity***

This will be achieved by:

- Integrating transport and land use planning to support sustainable growth, particularly for growth areas identified in the Core Strategy
- Securing Transport Assessments for new development in order to sufficiently identify and mitigate the impacts of development on the transport network

- Directing new development to locations that have greater access to public transport and can minimise the impact on the transport network
- Securing developer contributions to ensure transport improvements mitigate the impacts of new development
- Investing in better public transport provision
- Enhancing the public realm for both walking and cycling
- Improving the accessibility and safety of the Borough's transport network

4.1.2 *Objective 2: Effectively manage and enhance the Borough's transport infrastructure including its road network, parking facilities, bus routes and the Park and Ride service to increase the people moving capacity of the existing road network, help manage traffic congestion, improve reliability of transport and ensure a more efficient movement of goods and people*

This will be achieved by:

- Investing in enhanced public transport provision
- Lobbying Central Government to improve public transport policy and funding, including bus and rail services
- Reducing the demand for road space by enhancing the public realm, facilities for walking, cycling, and public transport
- Encouraging a greater use of car clubs
- Minimising the impact of road works on the highway network
- Reviewing the need for traffic signals where appropriate
- Securing Construction Management Plans to minimise impacts from new developments during construction
- Implementing freight initiatives and partnership working to improve the reliability and efficiency of deliveries

4.1.3 *Objective 3: Promote the enhancement of strategic transport links to and from Maidstone, and improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and all other road users*

This will be achieved by:

- Working with bus operators through the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership to increase bus frequencies across the borough.
- Working with Government to confirm Maidstone East's status as the principal Kent terminus for Thameslink rail services from 2019 and to secure all-day High Speed rail services between Maidstone West and London St Pancras
- Improving pedestrian crossing facilities
- Creating new and improved cycle routes for cyclists and advanced stop lines at signalised junctions
- Creating attractive streets to encourage more pedestrian activity and natural surveillance, using 'Design Against Crime' initiatives
- Implementing targeted speed reduction, including the creation of 20mph speed limits and zones where appropriate
- Providing road safety education and awareness campaigns including a programme of annual initiatives

4.1.4 *Objective 4: Encourage sustainable travel choices by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport use*

This will be achieved by:

- Working with bus operators through the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership to increase bus frequencies across the borough.
- Implementing the Maidstone Cycling Strategy (Appendix G)

- Campaigns and Travel Plan development with schools, businesses and other organisations
- Improving the pedestrian environment including better paving, crossing facilities, seating and signage
- Cycle training for both adults and children as well as more secure cycle parking
- Improving existing cycle routes and creating new cycle routes with better signage and road markings
- Working with transport providers to improve public transport integration, facilities and passenger information
- Expanding the Kent Freedom Pass scheme to 16-19 year olds

4.1.5 *Objective 5: Develop, maintain and promote a high quality and accessible pedestrian environment*

This will be achieved by:

- Improving the look and feel of the street to create places where people interact, play, shop, live, work and socialise
- Removing unnecessary street clutter such as guard-railing and redundant poles
- Road and footway maintenance
- Maintenance of bridges, structures and highway assets
- Delivering public realm improvement schemes as resources allow to enhance the pedestrian environment

4.1.6 *Objective 6: Address the air quality impacts of transport*

This will be achieved by:

- Implementing the Maidstone Air Quality Action Plan
- Encouraging the development of car clubs and low carbon vehicle technology

- Managing the forecast increase in traffic flows and encouraging a shift towards more sustainable travel
- Implementing a road user hierarchy that prioritises walking and cycling
- Encouraging better driver behaviour to reduce vehicle emissions
- Organising events and campaigns that promote sustainable travel
- Planting more street trees and urban greening
- Where necessary, using travel demand measures such as parking tariff levels to manage demand for vehicle trips

4.1.7 *Objective 7: Ensure the transport network provides inclusive access for all users*

This will be achieved by:

- Reducing traffic dominance and severance
- Improving road user safety
- Encouraging inclusive modes of transport that are affordable and easily available to everyone, such as walking, cycling and public transport
- Improving the provision of transport information
- Removing physical obstacles and introducing more accessible elements to the pedestrian environment such as dropped kerbs and wider footways

4.1.8 *Objective 8: Ensure that the provision of parking is fair and proportionate by considering the needs of all users, whilst also encouraging sustainable travel choices.*

This will be achieved by:

- Reviewing the Residents' Parking Zones to ensure they are fair, simple and meet the needs of all road users

- Ensuring that parking enforcement is fair and proportionate
- Avoiding an overprovision of parking provision that would otherwise undermine the use of more sustainable modes of travel
- Where necessary, using parking tariffs to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of travel when one is available

Policy Evolution Narrative

5.0 The South East Urban Extension

5.0.1 Initially in 2007, the Core Strategy advocated a Preferred Option (known as Option 7C) for an urban extension of approximately 4,000 to 5,000 houses to the south east of Maidstone within the Park Wood / Langley area. In terms of transport infrastructure, it was planned to support this growth with the provision of a new bypass road between the A20 Ashford Road / M20 Junction 8 and the A274 Sutton Road, to the north of the Five Wents junction.

5.0.2 Several variations of a route for the bypass were investigated and priced to identify an option that would be acceptable in planning terms. This meant a route that minimised the impacts on both the landscape character of the area and on local biodiversity. The preferred route devised was one that avoided directly cutting through the countryside by incorporating two sweeping curves with a contra-flow single carriageway with a 60mph speed limit. This option was known as the South East Maidstone Strategic Link (SEMSL) and was priced at approximately £75million.

5.0.3 The preferred route option was modelled by Jacobs in 2009 for the future years of both 2017 and 2026[42]; the end of the Core Strategy period. It was concluded that SEMSL had strong potential for handling traffic from the south and east of Maidstone and the urban extension. Unfortunately however, it is not forecast to significantly reduce town centre congestion, which was one of its key objectives.

5.1 Departure to a Dispersed Development Pattern

5.1.1 MBC has since taken the decision not to pursue the South East Urban Extension due to concerns regarding the deliverability of this option[43]. The onset of the economic downturn in 2008 influenced this decision and MBC concluded that the £75million estimated cost of the SEMSL could not be viably funded from

[42] Appendix H: Jacobs (2009) *Maidstone Visum Model 2017 & 2026 Forecast Models South East Maidstone Strategic Link Impacts Summary, December 2009*

[43] MBC (2012) *Maidstone Sustainability Appraisal Report*

developer contributions within the Core Strategy period to 2026. If MBC were to proceed with implementing the South East Urban Extension without a strategic link road, it would have an unacceptable impact on congestion and subsequent air quality[44]. This would also incur other negative impacts on the historic and wildlife-rich landscape in this vicinity[45].

5.1.2 This now meant that the south east urban extension (Option 7C) was no longer deliverable and so a Core Strategy containing this approach would not be judged sound. Mindful of the need to balance housing and employment development with adequate transport infrastructure, and to develop local policies that are in general conformity with all South East Plan policies including the protection of natural assets, supporting the character of rural areas, and reducing transport congestion, MBC subsequently developed a dispersed development distribution pattern including several strategic development areas.

5.1.3 Transport modelling was undertaken for several option variations to the total number of homes and differing development patterns[46] and the decision was taken by MBC to approve for consultation a Core Strategy development distribution of 10,080 homes alongside strategic employment locations. As a result, the transport infrastructure solutions had to be reconsidered accordingly.

5.2 Options Reconsidered

5.2.1 Maidstone has a constrained transport network with limited opportunities to increase road capacity (or 'vehicle moving' capacity) within the existing development pattern of the urban area. This presents several challenges when attempting to provide for a dispersed development pattern which focuses new housing and employment on the fringes of the Maidstone Urban Area. Therefore an approach to increase the 'people moving'

[44] Appendix H: Jacobs (2009) *Maidstone Visum Model 2017 & 2026 Forecast Models South East Maidstone Strategic Link Impacts Summary, December 2009*

[45] MBC (2012) *Maidstone Sustainability Appraisal Report*

[46] Appendix I: Jacobs (2011) *Maidstone Option Testing Summary Tables, March 2011*

capacity of the transport network has been adopted, which focuses on increasing the uptake of sustainable modes of transport including more of a focus on public transport such as Park and Ride, commercial bus services, walking and cycling.

5.2.2 Modelling undertaken in 2011[47] included one option (Option S) for 10,080 homes alongside strategic employment locations with accompanying transport measures including improvements to Park and Ride and commercial bus services. A transport strategy focussed on these modes was considered the most cost effective means of accommodating the dispersed development distribution proposed whilst continuing to manage congestion in and around Maidstone town centre. Three variations to this strategy were subsequently modelled, including a 'Do minimum' option that essentially maintained the existing Park and Ride network with a few small-scale improvements; a 'Radial Park and Ride Sites' option that increased the number of sites to six at various satellite locations around the town centre with some bus priority improvements; and a 'North / South Park and Ride spine' option which closed all existing Park and Ride sites and built two new large sites; one to the north and one to the south of the town. The two Park and Ride sites in this latter option were linked to the town centre with significant bus priority measures, including dedicated bus lanes. In addition, detailed research and analysis was undertaken into[48] the town centre parking supply and tariffs, to determine what travel demand measures could be implemented; the performance of the current Park and Ride service; and the infrastructure required to implement these options.

5.2.3 Using the 'Do Minimum' option as a baseline, the remaining two options 'Radial P&R sites' and 'North / South P&R spine' were assessed in terms of scheme costs and benefits to the wider borough[49]. Both of these options recorded positive cost / benefit ratios, with the 'North / South Park and Ride spine' providing the greatest benefits. The capital costs for these schemes included a

[47] Appendix I: Jacobs (2011) *Maidstone Option Testing Summary Tables, March 2011*

[48] Appendix D & J: JMP (2011) *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research, Data Report, December 2011* & JMP (2011) *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research, Analysis Report, December 2011*

[49] Appendix B: JMP (2012) *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research Options Appraisal Report 2012*

cost of between £41million to £56million for Option 2 'Radial Park and Ride sites' and between £53million to £68million for Option 3 'North / South Park and Ride spine'.

5.3 Selecting an Option

5.3.1 The modelling results indicated that the principle of Option 3 of developing two large Park and Ride sites on a 'north/south spine' was correct; however the location of these sites was equally important. It was suggested that the two locations for Park and Ride with the greatest potential demand were within the vicinity of the M20 Junction 7 / Newnham Court in the north and adjacent to Linton Crossroads in the south[50]. This stood in contrast to the Option 3 'North / South Park and Ride Spine' option that included one large site near the M20 Junction 6 at Cobtree Roundabout and the other near Langley on the A274 Sutton Road. Therefore the way in which to progress this option would be to develop a 'hybrid' scheme including the 'North/South Park and Ride Spine' principle but to have large Park and Ride sites at both the M20 Junction 7 / Newnham Court and near Linton Crossroads.

5.3.2 A 'Call for P&R Sites' was issued to the public from 18th May 2012 to 22nd June 2012 to identify if land would be available at these locations and to seek expressions of interest for developing park and ride sites at the above locations. Two sites were forthcoming from the public; one near the M20 Junction 7 / Newnham Court and the other near Linton Crossroads. However, an assessment of the relevant planning issues relating to landscape and biodiversity impacts meant that neither of these sites could proceed. The M20 Junction 7 is constrained in large parts due to the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, as well as a number of designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and local wildlife sites (LWS). The location at Linton crossroads is primarily constrained due to the setting of the countryside south of the Greensand Ridge escarpment and issues relating to the inter-visibility with the Linton conservation area. If the site at Linton Crossroads were developed it would also lead to unacceptable

[50] Appendix K: JMP (2012) *Review of Maidstone Modelling and Appraisal Work, April 2012*

coalescence in an area where the character is primarily one of only loosely related settlements.

5.3.3 Although increased congestion was identified in the traffic modelling results for Option 1 'Do Minimum', this remained at acceptable levels throughout the Core Strategy period and the likelihood of gridlock was very low. Therefore in light of this and of the planning issues raised in 5.3.2; MBC felt that it was unable to establish an 'over-riding need' in order to justify the development of the 'North South Park and Ride Spine' scheme.

5.3.4 The significant cost of the 'hybrid' option was also considered unaffordable for the plan period and would require a significant CIL contribution from developers. The scale of contributions required would make development in the Borough very expensive and beyond what is considered appropriate and viable to charge for new developments. This issue in addition to the remaining planning issues identified in 5.3.2 brings into question the deliverability of this 'hybrid' scheme. This in itself jeopardises the soundness of the Core Strategy in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. MBC does not expect this 'hybrid' scheme can be delivered for the reasons outlined above.

5.4 The Preferred Option

5.4.1 The remaining deliverable alternative left available to MBC was to implement an option that included only those components of the options modelled that are affordable and are able to best target areas of congestion. This essentially uses the 'Do Minimum' option as a base to then continue with and improve the existing Park and Ride Service; improving commercial bus services to better than 10min frequency intervals; building a new northbound bus lane on A274 Sutton Road; and improving various key junctions around the borough, in particular in the strategic development areas to the north west and south east of the Maidstone Urban Area and also within the vicinity of the M20 Junction 8. An action plan for implementing this option is included in Chapter 5 *An Action Plan for Delivery*. At a total capital expenditure cost of some £38 million this option is considered affordable and deliverable and able to provide the

transport infrastructure necessary to support the development proposed by the Core Strategy.

An Action Plan for Delivery

6.0 An Integrated Approach to Delivery

6.0.1 An integrated approach needs to be taken to address the transport issues the borough faces. This is because transport issues are inherently linked to one another and by tackling one; there will inevitably be a positive or negative impact on another.

6.0.2 It is also important to recognise that transport itself forms part of the wider planning challenge. Indeed, it is land use that ultimately generates trips on the transport network and if these components are considered and addressed as a collective whole, then greater value will be delivered than if each were dealt with in isolation.

6.1 Action Plan

6.1.1 The action plan below attempts to link the components of the transport network both with each other and with land use as a whole.

6.1.2 Actions will be phased so that they will be implemented either over the short, medium or long term (see para 7.6 *Funding and Delivery Plan*). These actions will be crucial to ensuring that Maidstone functions effectively both as the County Town of Kent and as a regionally important transport hub.

6.1.3 All the measures detailed in this strategy are considered important, however there are five primary infrastructure improvements (or actions) that must be delivered by this strategy and so are given the highest priority. These include Actions 1, 2, 15, 16, and 17 as detailed in the action plan below.

6.1.4 Actions relating to transport infrastructure provision have been identified in the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that accompanies the Draft Core Strategy. The IDP also identifies capital funding required and potential funding sources to satisfy these requirements. In total the IDP identifies some £38 million worth of capital investment in transport and public realm improvement measures also detailed in the ITS.

6.1.4 The actions are as follows:

6.2.1 *Action 1 (2012 – 2015): Implement highway improvement schemes at strategic development locations in the north west and south east of Maidstone Urban Area and in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and M20 Junction 8 to enable development at strategic site allocations*

6.2.2 The development proposed by the Core Strategy will result in a significant increase in the number of private vehicle movements across the borough[51]. These will inevitably have an impact on road junctions within the vicinity of new development by increasing the volume of vehicles that use them. Therefore improvements have been identified as being required at the following key locations:

a) M20, Junction 7. This includes converting the M20 eastbound approach and the two A249 approaches to the roundabout to traffic signals, whilst leaving the M20 westbound approach as a give way; to prevent traffic tailing back on to the motorway during peak periods. In addition, road markings will be rearranged to improve visibility on the roundabout[52].

b) Bearsted Roundabout / New Cut Roundabout. This includes capacity improvements and provision of a pedestrian crossing at Bearsted Roundabout and at New Cut Roundabout.

c) Bearsted Rd, between Bearsted Roundabout and New Cut Roundabout. This includes the upgrading of the road to a dual carriageway in both directions.

d) Constructing bus priority measures on New Cut Road

[51] Appendix A & L: Jacobs (2012) *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012* & Jacobs (2012) *Technical Note Base & 2026 Option 1 (Do minimum) Turning Movements*

[52] Appendix M: Highways Agency (2008) *M20 Maidstone New Growth Point, 2008*

e) Signalising bus priority measures at the junction of New Cut Road and A20 Ashford Road

f) M20, Junction 5. This will include providing additional capacity on the M20 link roads to Coldharbour Roundabout; Coldharbour Roundabout itself; the 20/20 roundabout and the Hermitage Lane / London Road junction.

g) Queens Rd / St Andrews Rd / Tonbridge Rd / Fountain Lane junctions. This includes an opening up of the eastern end of St Andrews Road onto the Queens Road / Tonbridge Road junction. The direction of traffic between each of these junctions would be made one way in a clockwise direction.

h) Hermitage Lane in the vicinity of Barming Rail Station. This would include a new pedestrian crossing near the vehicle access to the rail station. To accommodate this, there will be a requirement to reorganise the existing bus stop layout

i) Constructing a new access road between Gore Court Road and Bicknor Wood to provide sufficient access to the new strategic site north of Bicknor Wood

j) Widening Gore Court Road between Bicknor Wood and White Horse Lane

k) Willington St / Sutton Rd junction. This includes a widening of the approaches from Willington St to create an additional left turning lane into A274 Sutton Road and provision for entry into a new bus lane

l) Constructing a new footway on the north side of Sutton Road

m) Constructing a new northbound dedicated bus lane on the A274 Sutton Road

n) Signalising the A20 Ashford Rd / Penford Hill Roundabout

o) Signalising the A20 Ashford Rd / Eyhorne Street / Great Danes Hotel Access

p) Improving the A20 Ashford Rd / M20 Link road Roundabout

q) A20 Ashford Rd / Willington Street junction. This includes a widening of the left turning movement from Ashford Road into Willington Street

r) M20 Junction 8. This includes building a two lane dedicated left slip to the westbound M20 slip road, and a reorganisation of the westbound merge[53].

6.2.3 Projects (a) – (r) are priority schemes to support the housing and employment growth proposed by the Core Strategy and will primarily be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and developer contributions secured under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Locations (s) to (w) (below) are identified 'crash cluster sites' which are being monitored by KCC on an annual basis for changes to the crash patterns and to identify potential crash remedial measures to be delivered using the County Council's Integrated Transport Block funding:

s) Running Horse Roundabout

t) Mill Street / Palace Avenue

u) Royal Engineers Rd Roundabout

v) A20 Broadway (north of St Peters St Maidstone)

w) A20 Ashford Rd / King Street junction

6.2.4 It should be noted that no improvements have been identified for M20 Junction 6 because land constraints mean that improvements would be very expensive compared with the level of benefit

[53] Appendix M: Highways Agency (2008) *M20 Maidstone New Growth Point*

provided[54], so these funds will be better spent elsewhere on the network.

6.2.3 The following table shows the cost range of these strategic junction improvements:

Cost Estimates for Highway Improvements at Strategic Locations			
Strategic Development Location	***Scheme Location***	***Minimum Cost (£££) 000s***	***Maximum Cost (£££) 000s***
M20, Junction 7	M20 Junction 7	200	200
M20, Junction 7	Bearsted Roundabout / New Cut Roundabout	500	700
M20, Junction 7	Bearsted Rd, between Bearsted Roundabout and New Cut Roundabout	1300	1600
M20, Junction 7	New Cut Rd / A20 Ashford Rd	600	800
NW	M20 Junction 5 / Coldharbour Roundabout / 20-20 Roundabout /Hermitage Lane / London Rd junction	3,800	5,400
NW	Queens Rd / St Andrews Rd / Tonbridge Rd / Fountain Lane junctions	670	1060

[54] Appendix M: Parsons Brinckerhoff (2008) *Highways Agency M20 Maidstone New Growth Point*

NW	New pedestrian crossing Hermitage Lane near Barming Rail Station	91	95
SE	New road between Gore Court Road and Bicknor Wood	800	970
SE	Widening of Gore Court Road between Bicknor Wood and White Horse Lane	860	1,040
SE	Willington St / A274 Sutton Rd junction	630	820
SE	New footway on north side of Sutton Rd	180	220
SE	A274 Sutton Road northbound bus lane between Willington Street and Wheatsheaf Junction	5,910	7,260
M20, Junction 8	Ashford Rd / Penford Hill junction	281	562
M20, Junction 8	Ashford Rd / Eyhorne Street / Great Danes Hotel Access	324	691
M20, Junction 8	Ashford Rd (A20) / M20 Link road Roundabout	148	182
M20, Junction 8	Ashford Rd (A20) / Willington Street Junction	52	98
M20, Junction 8	M20 J8 Westbound slip lane and merge	1,950	1,950

6.3.1 *Action 2 (2012 – 2015): Improvements to transport infrastructure at selected Rural Service Centres*

6.3.2 Harrietsham:

a) New pedestrian and cycling link between Harrietsham Primary School and Harrietsham railway station.

6.3.3 Headcorn:

a) Footway, carriageway and street-lighting improvements on Grigg Lane and Oak Lane. Improved pedestrian access to the railway station from the east will also be investigated and implemented if viable.

6.3.4 Staplehurst:

a) An increase of approximately 100 car parking spaces at Staplehurst Railway Station to accommodate the additional movements expected as a result of new development in the village;

b) A new pedestrian and cycling link between the railway station and the residential area to the south of the Lodge Road Industrial Estate;

c) Improvements to the ease and quality of bus/rail interchange within the vicinity of the railway station;

d) Construction of a new pedestrian crossing of Marden Road in the vicinity of its junction with Limetrees

6.3.5 Investigations of suitable CIL-funded transport schemes in Marden and Lenham with the respective Parish Councils are ongoing and will be considered for implementation when funding becomes available.

6.4.1 *Action 3 (2012 – 2015): Enlarge car park at Barming Rail Station by 200 spaces*

6.4.2 Barming Railway Station is likely to be increasingly used by patrons from the proposed new developments in the North West of the borough, particularly following the introduction of the new Thameslink service in 2019, which will effectively increase the frequency of London-bound trains to one every 15mins during peak periods. The station also has the potential to serve as an informal 'Park and Ride' service into Maidstone town centre. Whilst pedestrian and cycle routes will be improved for access to the station, the capacity for vehicles to access the station may also need to be enhanced. Therefore it is planned to explore the feasibility of expanding the station car park by approximately 200 spaces to accommodate the expected increase in demand.

6.5.1 *Action 4 (2012 – 2015): Introduce a 16+ Travel Pass for bus travel*

6.5.2 KCC has committed to introduce a new bus pass for 16-19 year olds, to make travel more affordable for sixth formers, college students and apprentices. It will cost £10 per week and provide unlimited bus travel 7 days a week, promoting modal shift and providing significant social inclusion benefits.

6.6.1 *Action 5 (2012 – 2015): Investigate a reorganisation of the Park and Ride fare structure to target private vehicles rather than passengers only*

6.6.2 Currently the Park and Ride fare structure is such that it does not encourage car sharing as one car load of passengers is expected to pay multiple fares to use the service. This issue conflicts with the objective of reducing the number of vehicles on the road network and has also contributed towards the Park and Ride Service's annual subsidy requirement. This is clearly not sustainable in the current financial climate and puts the future of the service at risk. Therefore MBC will explore the feasibility of shifting the fare structure for the Park and Ride Service from 'Pay-to-ride' to 'Pay-to-Park' by 2013.

6.7.1 *Action 6 (2012 – 2015): Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce its overall demand for car parking*

6.7.2 The new Parking Standards will ensure that the needs of car users are reasonably met but also that the agreed level of provision does not undermine more sustainable modes of travel where these are readily available. However, where there is no alternative to use of the private car, the Standards will enable a fair and appropriate amount of parking to be provided. The Standards will also provide for developments' cycle parking requirements, as well as ensuring that they incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure where appropriate. It is anticipated that the Parking Standards will be introduced by MBC during 2013-2014.

6.8.1 *Action 7 (2012 – 2015): Increase long stay parking tariffs (4+ hours) and season ticket tariffs for Council owned car parks by 50% (excluding inflation)*

6.8.2 This action will contribute towards the management of demand for private vehicle trips into the town centre and is directed at encouraging car commuters to consider walking, cycling or using public transport as an alternative. This will have the effect of better managing traffic congestion and related problems in the town centre during peak periods.

6.9.1 *Action 8 (2012 – 2015): Increase short stay parking tariffs (<4 hours) for Council owned car parks by 20% (excluding inflation)*

6.9.2 As with Action 8 above, this action is also for the purpose of managing the demand for private vehicle trips into the town centre and encouraging modal shift. However, it is recognised that short stay town centre car parking plays a vital role in supporting businesses in the town centre and so this is reflected in the lower level of tariff increase proposed when compared with the Council's long stay parking tariff increase. This is considered reasonable by the Council as the new parking tariff levels will still

remain competitive with the private town centre car parking market[55].

6.10.1 *Action 9 (2012 – 2015): Implement MBC and KCC travel plans to more efficiently manage our own travel behaviours*

6.10.2 The objectives of MBC's Maidstone House Travel Plan are as follows:

1. Reduce employee single occupancy travel to and from work
2. Increase cycling as an employee mode of travel to and from work
3. Increase public transport usage as an employee mode of travel to and from work
4. Reduce business related transport emissions year on year
5. Increase marketing activity around travel planning
6. Implement a travel plan monitoring strategy
7. Update travel related policies to fully support the travel plan objectives

6.10.3 The MBC Workplace Travel Plan includes a range of measures to achieve these objectives, including measures to encourage more walking and cycling, car sharing and use of public transport. Full details can be found in the Travel Plan itself[56].

6.10.4 KCC's County Hall Travel Plan has been in place since 1999. Its primary objective is to support the consolidation of the wider KCC estate and sustainable expansion of staff numbers at the site whilst maintaining the pre-existing number of car parking spaces. It also supports the County Council's Environment Strategy which seeks to reduce carbon emissions and the number of business miles travelled by employees[57]. The plan has been successful in enabling the expansion of the site with a proportionate decrease

[55] Appendix F: MBC (2011) *Maidstone Council Parking Tariffs 2011*

[56] MBC (2012) *Maidstone Borough Council Workplace Travel Plan, Maidstone House and Gateway*

[57] KCC (2010), *The Kent Environment Strategy 2010-13*

in the level of commuting by car, as well as a decrease in the number of business miles claimed. Key initiatives include:

1. management of car-parking spaces, allocated according to business need;
2. car sharing database in partnership with Liftshare.com;
3. pool car scheme operated by Zipcar;
4. Cycle2Work salary sacrifice scheme in partnership with Halfords;
5. discounted bus season tickets with Arriva secured through the New Ways 2 Work initiative;
6. promotion of the BTMeet Me tele-conferencing facility, video conferencing and webinars.

6.11.1 *Action 10 (2012 – 2015): Establish A20 Corridor Statutory Quality Bus Partnership Scheme*

6.11.2 As part of the Medway Valley Sustainable Transport Strategy – which has been developed by KCC to mitigate the combined transport impacts of six major developments in the Kings Hill, West Malling and Snodland areas of Tonbridge and Malling – a significant upgrade of bus services and related infrastructure is proposed on the A20 between West Malling and Maidstone during 2013. This will involve the delivery of new, low-emission vehicles for Route 71, enhanced bus stop facilities and information, and the coordinated management of traffic signals to improve journey time reliability. In order to lock in the benefits of this package of improvements for the longer-term, KCC will establish Kent's first Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS) using powers introduced by the Transport Act 2000. Under an SQPS, the local transport authority agrees to implement improved infrastructure or 'facilities' at particular locations along specified bus routes. Operators wishing to use these facilities are then required to commit to providing services to an agreed standard. Only those operators which are prepared to meet the quality standards specified in the Scheme are permitted to use the facilities. Under the A20 Corridor SQPS Agreement (which would be subject to a

full public consultation) it is envisaged that bus services using the specified Scheme facilities would be required, as a minimum:-

- to operate to a clock face timetable with an even headway between departures;
- to be operated by low-floor, easy access buses;
- to meet a specified minimum vehicle emission standard which would be increased incrementally over time;
- to display the agreed scheme branding;
- to accept ITSO Smartcards and to provide Real-Time Information; and
- to provide at least one ticket available for use on all other services using the Scheme facilities and priced at a level agreed with KCC.

6.11.3 The performance of the SQPS will be closely monitored by KCC, in terms of its impact on bus patronage, congestion and air quality. If successful, this model may be rolled out to other inter-urban bus corridors serving Maidstone during the period of the ITS.

6.12.1 *Action 11 (2012 – 2015): Lobby Government for improved rail services to Maidstone in the new South Eastern Franchise*

6.12.2 The Rail Action Plan for Kent (RAPK) sets out KCC's principal recommendations to Government for the specification of the new South Eastern Kent Franchise, which will commence in April 2014 for a period of six years[58]. It describes the present level of service on the Maidstone East Line as "completely unacceptable" and calls for the new franchise to "address this omission above all else"; initially by providing an hourly service all day between Maidstone East and Blackfriars, to reintroduce direct rail services to the City of London, and then replacing this with an all day half-hourly Thameslink service to Blackfriars, Farringdon, St Pancras and north from 2019. Amongst its other 'key requirements' are:-

[58] KCC (2011), *Rail Action Plan for Kent*

- There should be a regular peak-period Mainline service to designated West End and City stations on each principal rail route in Kent. There should also be a regular off-peak period service to a designated West End station from each major town in Kent;
- The peak-period High Speed service on the Medway Valley Line between Maidstone West and St Pancras via Strood should be included in the new franchise and extended to provide an all day service, with an additional stop at Maidstone Barracks; and
- The Government should include a requirement for Smartcard ticketing in the new franchise, which would provide the potential for integrated bus/rail ticketing.

6.12.3 The RAPK builds on the excellent partnership working that exists between the County Council, Southeastern and Network Rail and fully takes into account the views expressed at KCC's regular Rail Summits involving MBC, MPs and Rail User Groups. The Plan has been formally presented to the Rail Minister and has formed the basis of positive discussions with senior officials at the Department for Transport.

6.13.1 ***Action 12 (2012 – 2015): Introduce a subsidised shuttle bus between the Strategic Development Location at M20 Junction 7 and the town centre, to be funded by development coming forward at this location***

6.13.2 Development at this location will need to be sufficiently linked to the town centre in order to complement the land uses in the town centre. This will be achieved by providing a shuttle bus linking the site to the town centre via New Cut Road and A20 Ashford Road.

6.14.1 ***Action 13 (Ongoing): Maintain and develop Maidstone's Intelligent Transport Systems and the proactive sharing of real time traffic and transport information with road users to manage congestion***

6.14.2 KCC is committed to building on the success of the Maidstone Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system during the period of the ITS to continue enabling the County and Borough Councils to maximise the capacity of the existing road network and to respond proactively to incidents. In doing so, both Councils will seek to make use of new and emerging technology to share real-time traffic and travel information with road users and facilitate informed journey choices. KCC will also continue to work closely with the Highways Agency to ensure that the management of the strategic and local road networks is fully integrated. As part of its efforts to improve journey time reliability, the County Council is seeking to become the first local transport authority outside London to introduce a Lane Rental Scheme. If approved by the Department for Transport, the Scheme would enable KCC to impose daily charges on streetworks and roadworks undertaken on the most congested parts of the county's road network during the busiest times of day. The revenue raised from the Scheme would be used to implement further traffic management measures in these areas.

6.15.1 ***Action 14 (2016 – 2021): Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre including on upper Week Street, Gabriel's Hill, the River Medway Towpath and Lower High Street***

6.15.2 MBC has recently completed its High Street Public Realm Scheme successfully (Fig 6). This has revitalised the High Street and now supports future growth in nearby businesses. Building on this success, MBC also has aspirations to upgrade the upper half of Week Street (further towards Maidstone East Station), Gabriel's Hill and the lower section of the High Street with links to the riverside towpath (Fig 7). It is hoped that funding to implement these schemes will be secured both through CIL and external sources during the ITS period.

6.15.3 Ongoing improvements will continue to be made to the River Medway towpath to improve both the pedestrian and cyclist experience. An investigation of the benefits of building a pedestrian bridge to improve connectivity over the River Medway between Earl Street and St Peter's Street is also currently ongoing.

6.15.4 Outside of the town centre, Maidstone has a rich rural pedestrian environment, provided for by its footpaths and bridleways through the countryside. MBC will work with KCC to improve both the public realm of Maidstone's outlying villages and its rural pedestrian routes through the borough.

6.16.1 ***Action 15 (2022 – 2026): Build a 'bus only' northbound lane on the A274 Sutton Road between its junction with Willington Street and the Wheatsheaf Junction***

6.16.2 Land on the public highway on A274 Sutton Road has been identified as capable of accommodating a bus lane (northbound only) between Willington Street and the Wheatsheaf Junction (Fig 8). This would make a significant contribution to improving the speed and reliability of buses operating on this busy corridor and would directly serve the South East Maidstone strategic housing allocation proposed in the Core Strategy.

6.17.1 ***Action 16 (Ongoing): Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a 7min frequency is achieved on the majority of radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area***

6.17.2 MBC and KCC are currently working with the borough's principal commercial bus operator, Arriva, to meet this objective as part of the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership. This service frequency has already been achieved on some of the existing radial routes; notably the A20 London Road and the A274 Sutton Road. However, there remains potential to improve the collective frequency of services to 7mins on the A229 Royal Engineers Way (to and from the Medway Towns) and the A26 Tonbridge Road (to and from Maidstone Hospital, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells).

6.17.3 In addition to the above, there is potential to improve existing service frequencies on other radial routes into Maidstone town centre. There are aspirations to provide a 10min frequency on the A229 Loose Road; a 15min frequency on the A249 Sittingbourne Road; and a 20min frequency on the A20 Ashford Road within the Maidstone Urban Area.

6.17.4 As part of the Kings Hill development in Tonbridge and Malling, the developer is required to enhance the Route 72 bus service between Kings Hill and Maidstone to a 15min daytime frequency, including the routing of two buses per hour via the M20 to improve the speed and reliability of the service.

6.17.5 Service improvements to the Rural Service Centres have also been investigated; however the subsidy requirement to increase the frequency of these relatively lightly used routes is prohibitively high and so improvements to these services are not currently cost effective. Therefore efforts will be concentrated on maintaining these services at the present level of frequency.

6.18.1 ***Action 17 (Ongoing): Maintain existing P&R provision at the current level of service***

6.18.2 Park and Ride has been identified as a primary contributor to minimising the growth of traffic congestion in Maidstone town centre and so it is vital that the service is continued into the future. MBC has made a commitment to maintain the Park and Ride Service at its current level of service for the plan period on the basis that measures will be undertaken to significantly reduce the current approximate £400,000 subsidy requirement.

6.19.1 ***Action 18 (Ongoing): Ensure the objectives, management and budgets for both P&R and Parking Services remain combined and integrated***

6.19.2 A local authority's parking service can often have conflicting objectives with the same authority's Park and Ride service; the former is to primarily provide town centre car parking and an associated revenue stream; the latter is to reduce town centre congestion. Therefore these services must be planned and managed collectively if they are to make a full and effective contribution to the ITS objectives.

6.20.1 ***Action 19 (Ongoing): Fund and implement a strong marketing campaign for P&R to encourage modal shift to P&R by 2012 and continue indefinitely***

6.20.2 MBC has already commissioned the drafting of a marketing campaign for the re-launch of the Park and Ride Service. This will be implemented this year and will continue indefinitely into the future.

6.21.1 ***Action 20 (Ongoing): Facilitate the expansion of the County Hall Car Club service to meet any identified increase in demand on an annual basis***

6.21.2 MBC is working with KCC and the car club operator, Zipcar, to develop the County Hall Car Club service. This currently includes three cars – two located outside County Hall and one on Church Street – which can be reserved for use by any local Zipcar member. It is also available for use by KCC staff for travel during the course of work. Membership and usage of the car club is low relative to similar schemes elsewhere in the UK. MBC has therefore committed to promote the scheme as a business travel option for its own employees and to work with KCC to market it more widely within Maidstone.

6.22.1 ***Action 21 (Ongoing): Implement the Maidstone Cycling Strategy***

6.22.2 The Maidstone Cycling Strategy (Appendix G) has earmarked a number of cycle routes for improvement that will provide significant benefits for both cyclists and pedestrians and good value for money. An expansion of the cycling infrastructure of the town is also included, such as the installation of new cycle stands and lockers at strategic locations.

6.22.3 The Maidstone Cycling Strategy includes a number of objectives including:

- Create new routes and linkages
- Maintain the existing cycle route network
- Improve cycle security and parking

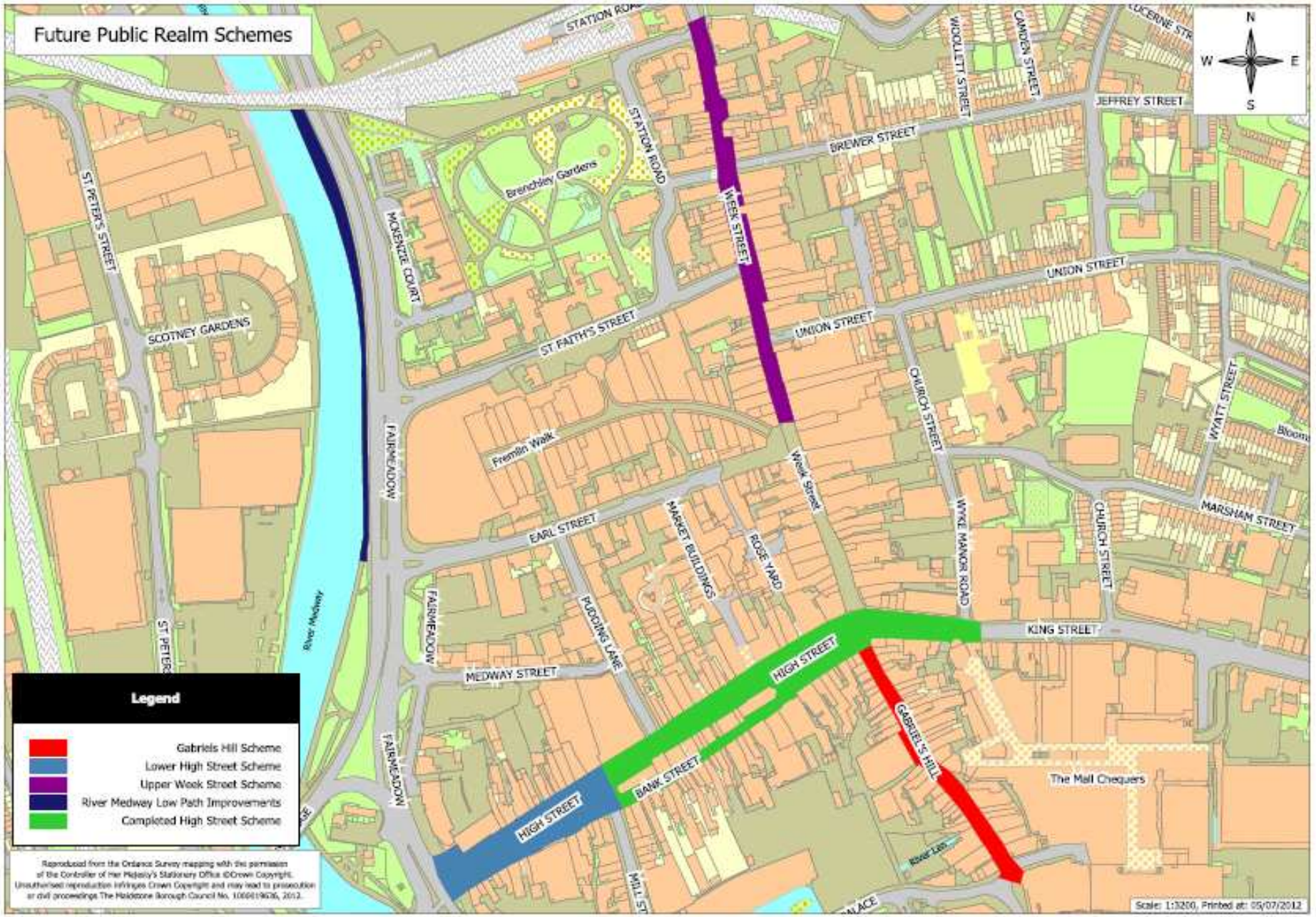

Figure 7: Future Public Realm Improvement Schemes

Figure 8: A274 Sutton Rd Northbound Bus Lane proposal

- Promote a cycling culture

6.22.4 As part of measures to achieve these objectives, MBC has already secured funding to build 25 new cycle stands at the junction of Brewer Street / Week Street; junction of Union Street / Week Street; Brenchley Gardens adjacent to the Museum; Earl Street adjacent to the entrance of Fremlins Walk and Gabriel's Hill adjacent to the entrance of The Mall Chequers. MBC also has funding to build further stands at other strategic locations within the town centre.

6.23.1 *Action 22 (Ongoing): Implement Maidstone's Air Quality Action Plan to minimise the impact of transport on air quality and facilitate the delivery of low carbon vehicle infrastructure*

6.23.2 Acceptable limits of Nitrogen Dioxide dictated by EU law have been exceeded in six locations within the Maidstone Urban Area, (Fig. 9) including Lower Stone Street and the Wheatsheaf Junction. Maidstone's Air Quality Action Plan (MAQAP) has been introduced to address this and to improve the borough's air quality more generally.

6.23.3 Great potential now exists for low carbon vehicles to play a major role in the way we travel and it is increasingly likely that they will replace the existing fossil fuelled fleet in the future. Therefore Government both at a central and local level must be prepared to facilitate this shift, which has been identified as an action objective in KCC's Environment Strategy[59].

6.23.4 The following initiatives will be employed by MBC and KCC to deliver the objectives of the MAQAP and to enable a shift to low carbon vehicle use:

a) Investigate the re-routing of vehicles to avoid designated Air Quality Management Areas

b) Provide incentives to encourage the uptake of low carbon vehicle use at no revenue loss to MBC or KCC

[59] KCC (2011) *Growing the Garden of England: A strategy for environment and economy in Kent July 2011*

c) Maintain an active role in the Freight, Taxi and Bus Quality Partnerships to ensure the uptake of the European Emission Standards for vehicles

d) Facilitate the introduction of low carbon vehicle charging/fuelling points and to ensure this infrastructure is compatible across Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Greater London by participating in the 'South East Electric Vehicle Network Partnership'. This will support local car dealerships selling low carbon vehicles and the development of low carbon technology. It will also be achieved by a requirement to provide an appropriate percentage of low carbon vehicle compatible parking spaces through supplementary planning guidance such as parking standards for development.

e) Investigate, and seek to create a public sector run low carbon vehicle refuelling infrastructure. This will be developed by working in partnership with other public sector bodies and funded by the public sector and/or grant funding. A reciprocal public sector refuelling infrastructure would enable the public sector to champion low carbon vehicle procurement for their own fleets in order to realise the longer term carbon and potential financial savings this technology can offer

f) Investigate and support public/private partnerships for low carbon refuelling stations in the borough to help businesses gain access to low carbon fleets and the potential longer term financial savings that low carbon vehicles may provide

g) Develop a greener MBC fleet through the inclusion of a sustainable transport procurement policy in the MBC Procurement Strategy

6.23.5 The MAQAP will be updated at a minimum of every 5 years in accordance with Local Air Quality Management best practice to ensure it is a living document that evolves with a changing traffic environment and advancements in green technology.

6.24.1 ***Action 23 (Ongoing): Maintain and promote KCC's car share website*** (www.kentjourneyshare.com)

6.24.2 Maidstone has one of the highest rates of single occupancy car use in the county with 52% of vehicle trips having only single occupants. The Kent average is 48%, with some major employers in Kent managing 42%[60]. In order to lower this rate and to incentivise higher car occupancy KCC manages kentjourneyshare; a free web-based service which links drivers, passengers, walkers, cyclists and taxi users who make similar journeys and encourages them to share their trip. In July 2010, there were 3,400 members equating to an approximate saving of 360 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per annum. The County Council aims to increase membership by 25% each year during the current Local Transport Plan period (2011-16), with a target of 8,500 members by 2014/15.

6.25.1 ***Action 24 (Ongoing): Install real-time / up-to-date travel information in selected bus shelters across the borough***

6.25.2 Real-time / up-to-date travel information boards in targeted locations provide the travelling public with greater confidence and reassurance in the public transport network. It can often make the difference between whether an individual chooses to use bus or rail.

[60] KCC (2012) Data extraction from Kent Travel Plans

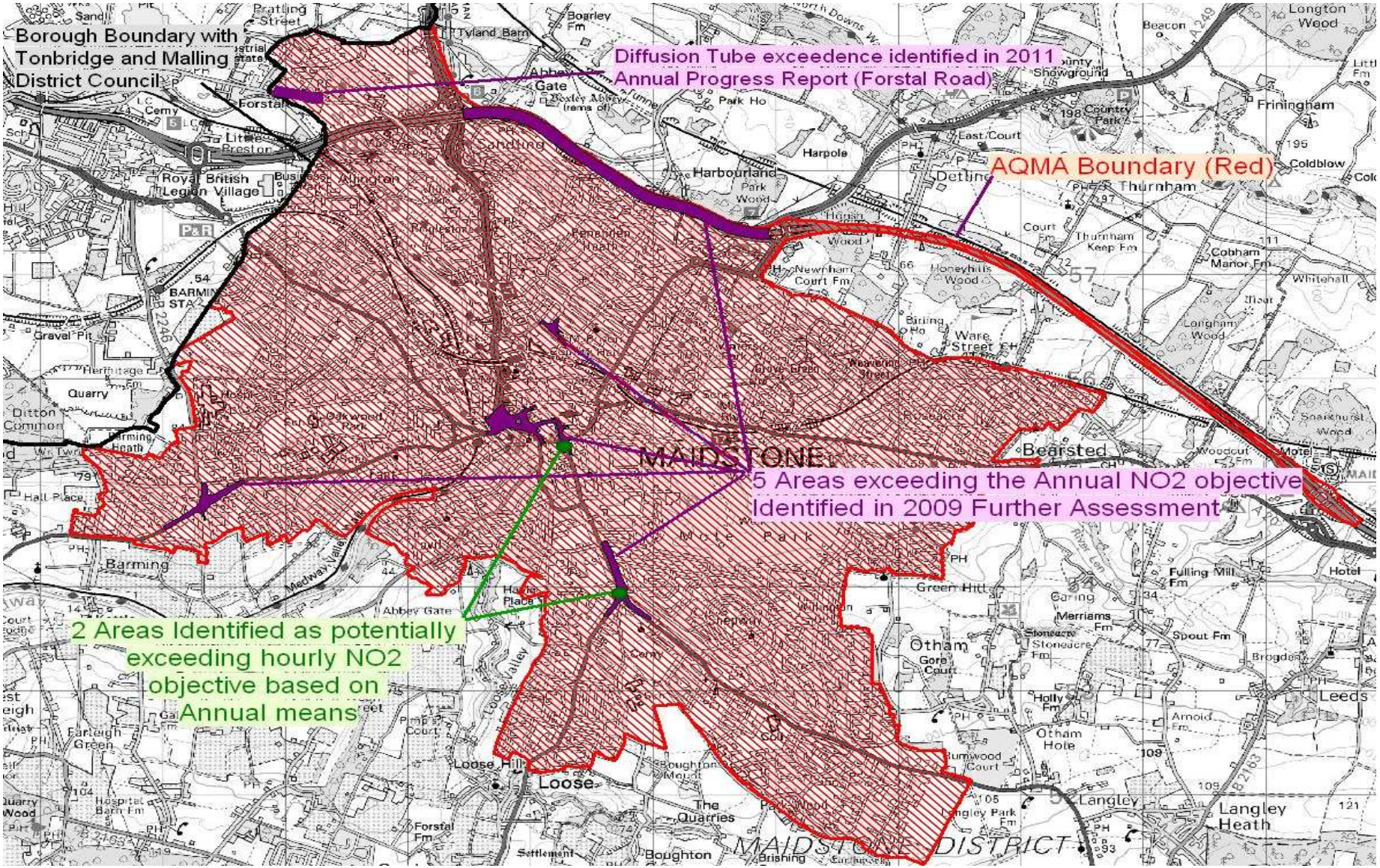

Figure 9: Maidstone Air Quality Management Areas of Exceedence

services or not. For the most part, Maidstone's railway stations now benefit from prominent customer information screens providing live train running information. Real-time information screens have also been installed at key bus stops on Maidstone High Street and at other strategic locations; however there is scope to expand the coverage of this technology.

6.25.3 With this in mind, KCC will target the provision of new passenger information boards on the core public transport routes linking Maidstone town centre with both the Rural Service Centres and the strategic housing development areas to the North West and South East of the town in particular to encourage modal shift. The County Council will also promote the use of 'smart phones' as a means of accessing up-to-date travel information.

6.26.1 ***Action 25 (Ongoing): Secure Travel Plans for new development coming forward***

6.26.2 Travel Plans will be secured by MBC and KCC on a case-by-case basis for planning applications where appropriate. They will need to be prepared in accordance with KCC's *Revised Guidance on Securing, Monitoring and Enforcing Travel Plans in Kent, January 2012*, which sets out two different levels of Travel Plan depending on the size, type and local sensitivity of development.

6.26.4 Level 1 is a 'Measures-Based Travel Plan', setting out key baseline interventions to facilitate and encourage sustainable travel choices, which will generally be secured by way of a planning condition. Level 1 Travel Plans are considered suitable for most small to medium residential sites and smaller commercial developments within areas where cumulative traffic increase is seriously impacting the environment, economic vitality and/or quality of life.

6.26.5 Level 2 is an 'Outcomes-Based Travel Plan', which may involve ongoing monitoring, targets and sanctions. They are considered suitable for large commercial and mixed-use developments with potential for significant trip generation; some medium commercial and mixed-use developments in areas where cumulative traffic increase is seriously impacting the environment, economic vitality and/or quality of life; and some larger residential developments depending on the local context.

6.26.6 Travel Plans can also be used to manage construction vehicles accessing a development during its construction, but also servicing vehicles to the development once it is built. It is often the case that both construction and servicing arrangements can have a significant impact on the highway by causing disruption and traffic congestion, therefore travel plans to manage these vehicles will be secured where necessary.

6.27.1 ***Action 26 (Ongoing): Ensure road safety education continues to be provided for across the borough***

6.27.2 Since the vast majority of road accidents result from the actions of one or more road users, improving road user behaviour continues to be the main priority within KCC's approach to further reducing crash casualties. The priority concerns and challenges that have been identified through the analysis of crash and casualty data and wider research findings are: speed, road user impairment, and anti-social values. For the period 2010-2020, KCC has therefore committed to preparing a three-year rolling programme of activities that uses the individual and combined effects of education, training and publicity in an intelligence-led manner. Accident data and research findings will be used to guide priorities, to identify key target groups and to determine the most effective ways of communicating with them. The County Council will lead collective partnership working through the Kent and Medway Casualty Reduction Group (CaRe Group) to improve road user behaviour through public education activities including publicity campaigns, public engagement projects and public relations strategies.

6.27.3 It is also recognised that people are deterred from cycling as a result of safety concerns associated with speeding traffic and busy, hostile road conditions. In addition to activities and interventions aimed at tackling these issues, cycle training can improve confidence and skills to enable people to cycle safety. Cycle instruction in Kent is formed of two separate courses – Kent Rider and Bikeability – both of which provide school pupils with valuable cycle training. During the LTP3 period, a common set of processes will be developed to deliver a standard programme of cycle training across the county, to include adult cycle training programmes.

6.28.1 *Action 27 (Ongoing): Construct the Romney Place Bus Lane*

6.28.2 Romney Place provides a shorter and more convenient route by which vehicles travelling southbound on Lower Stone Street can access Watt Tyler Way without negotiating the Lower Stone Street/Upper Stone Street/Mote Road/Knightrider Street crossroads. However, Romney Place is not designed as a major through route and its heavy use during peak periods causes significant congestion on Lower Stone Street as well as delay to buses seeking to access The Mall Chequers Bus Station. It also causes hazards to pedestrians seeking to cross Romney Place at its junction with Lower Stone Street. It is therefore proposed to limit access to Romney Place from the west to buses only and to encourage vehicle movement to Wat Tyler Way via Lower Stone Street and Mote Road. This will be achieved through the creation of an eastbound bus lane in place of the existing carriageway lane (Fig. 10).

6.29.1 *Action 28 (Ongoing): Maintain the Kent Messenger 'Walk to School' Charity and 'New Ways 2 Work' Initiatives*

6.29.2 MBC is a sponsor of the KM Charity Group 'Walk to School' which seeks to encourage more parents and children to walk to school. As school induced traffic has a significant impact on the road network during peak times, schemes such as these contribute greatly to managing traffic congestion.

6.29.3 Additionally, KCC manages the 'New Ways 2 Work' scheme (of which MBC is a founding member) which is a collaborative partnership of Kent businesses, local authorities, transport providers and other organisations for encouraging sustainable travel choices. This scheme essentially promotes sensible and efficient use of vehicles and road space to enable traffic to keep moving. This will be maintained indefinitely and can be accessed at http://newways2work.org.uk/

6.30.1 *Action 29 (Ongoing): Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and reduce footway clutter, in particular in town and rural centres*

6.30.2 Numerous columns for street signs and street furniture in general present themselves as hazards to pedestrian movement and in some cases pedestrian safety. There is scope to rationalise street signage and street furniture to reduce the number of columns and general street clutter to provide more footway space. This can be achieved by positioning more than one sign on street columns and in some cases on buildings rather than single signs on columns that take up footway space. This will have the effect of making it easier to navigate public spaces and will also add to the overall experience of these public places.

6.31.1 *Action 30 (2016 – 2021): Implement the Maidstone Bridge Gyratory Bypass Scheme to improve traffic flow through the town centre*

6.31.2 One of the greatest constraints on the Maidstone town centre transport network is the St Peter's Bridge / Broadway Bridge gyratory. Currently, northbound traffic on the A229 has to enter the bridge gyratory travelling in a clockwise direction; cross over to the west bank of the River Medway via Broadway Bridge and then back to the east bank via St Peter's Bridge before continuing on northbound. This convoluted route adds significant pressure to the gyratory system and has an impact on other traffic using the gyratory, particularly motorists seeking to exit St Peter's Street.

6.31.3 The Bridge Gyratory Bypass Scheme (Appendix N) proposes to build a new northbound link on the east bank of the River Medway which circumvents the need for northbound traffic to cross the river. This would add significant additional capacity to the gyratory and would help manage existing congestion through the town centre[61]. It will require the relocation of an electricity substation and is therefore expected to cost some £4.8 million.

[61] Appendix O: Jacobs (2005), *Maidstone Town Centre Micro Simulation Model: Assessment of Maidstone Bridge Gyratory A229 Through Link Option*

Figure 10: Romney Place Bus Lane proposal

This scheme will be funded only by KCC through its Integrated Transport Block Funding Allocation but will not be required to be contributed towards by new development coming forward.

ITS Action Plan		
Action	***Description***	***Capital Cost***
1*	Implement highway improvement schemes at strategic locations in the north west and south east of Maidstone Urban Area and in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and M20 Junction 8	£24m
2*	Improvements to transport infrastructure at selected Rural Service Centres including Harrietsham, Heacorn and Staplehurst	£500k
3	Enlarge car park at Barming Rail Station by 200 spaces	£2.1m
4	Introduce a 16+ Travel Pass for bus travel	nil
5	Investigate a reorganisation of the Park and Ride fare structure to target private vehicles rather than passengers only	nil
6	Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce its overall demand for car parking	nil
7	Increase long stay parking tariffs (4+ hours) and season ticket tariffs for Council owned car parks by 50% (excluding inflation)	nil
8	Increase short stay parking tariffs (<4 hours) for Council owned car parks by 20% (excluding inflation)	nil
9	Implement MBC and KCC travel plans to more efficiently manage our own travel behaviours	nil
10	Establish A20 Corridor Statutory Quality Bus Partnership Scheme	nil
11	Lobby Government for improved rail services to Maidstone in the new Kent Franchise	nil

12	Introduce a subsidised shuttle bus between the Strategic Development Location at M20 Junction 7 and the town centre, to be funded by development coming forward at this location	nil
13	Maintain and develop Maidstone's Intelligent Transport Systems and the proactive sharing of real time traffic and transport information with road users to manage congestion	nil
14	Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre including on upper Week Street, Gabriel's Hill and the River Medway Towpath and Lower High Street	£5.5m
15*	Build a 'bus only' northbound lane on the A274 Sutton Road between the junction with Willington Street and Wheatsheaf Junction	(£7.3m included in action 1)
16*	Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a 7min frequency is achieved on the majority of radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area	nil
17*	Maintain existing P&R provision at the current level of service	nil
18	Ensure the objectives, management and budgets for both P&R and Parking Services remain combined and integrated	nil
19	Fund and implement a strong marketing campaign for P&R to encourage modal shift to P&R by 2012 and continue indefinitely	nil
20	Facilitate the expansion of the County Hall Car Club service to meet any identified increase in demand on an annual basis	nil
21	Implement the Maidstone Cycling Strategy	£750k

22	Implement Maidstone's Air Quality Action Plan to minimise the impact of transport on air quality and facilitate the delivery of low carbon vehicle infrastructure	nil
23	Maintain and promote KCC's car share website	nil
24	Install real-time / up-to-date travel information in selected bus shelters	£100k
25	Secure Travel Plans for new development coming forward	nil
26	Ensure road safety education continues to be provided for across the borough	nil
27	Construct the Romney Place Bus Lane	£60k
28	Maintain the Kent Messenger 'Walk to School' Charity and 'New Ways 2 Work' Initiatives	nil
29	Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and reduce footway clutter, in particular in town and rural centres	£200k
30	Implement the Maidstone Bridge Gyratory Bypass Scheme to improve traffic flow through the town centre	£4.8m
	TOTAL	**£38m**

Considered as one of the five primary infrastructure improvement measures to be given the highest priority

Funding and Investment

7.0 Comprehensive Spending Review 2010

7.0.1 The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review confirmed that public sector funding for transport would be significantly reduced in the medium-term, meaning that local authorities cannot continue to rely on existing Government funding streams. The principal funding sources currently available to KCC and MBC for the delivery of local transport schemes are documented in detail below.

7.1 Major Scheme Funding

7.1.1 Under the previous Government, the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) was the mechanism by which local authorities bid for funding for transport schemes costing in excess of £5 million. In order to secure funding, schemes were appraised and ranked by the South East England Partnership Board according to their alignment with the objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy (the South East Plan). Periodically, the Government asked each Regional Authority for advice on its priority schemes, within an indicative RFA. Its response to this advice included a list for each English region of the schemes that it expected to fund, pending the submission of a Major Scheme Business Case to the Department for Transport (DfT).

7.1.2 In June 2010, the Government announced that the RFA process was to be suspended with immediate effect pending the Comprehensive Spending Review. The Spending Review confirmed that no new Major Schemes would be considered for funding before 2015/16 at the earliest. The DfT is currently undertaking a review of the strategic framework for the funding and prioritisation of local authority Major Schemes following the abolition of the regional tier of government. It is likely that the RFA process will be replaced by a sub-regional procedure involving Local Transport Bodies – consisting of Local Enterprise Partnerships and local authorities – which will agree, manage and oversee the delivery of a prioritised programme of transport schemes largely independently from Government from 2015 onwards.

7.2 Integrated Transport Block Funding

7.2.1 The Integrated Transport (IT) Block is a capital funding allocation paid to KCC on an annual basis by the DfT. It is the mechanism by which the majority of measures in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) have traditionally been funded. The IT Block supports investment in small-scale transport infrastructure projects costing less than £5 million, including crash remedial measures, improvements to walking and cycling routes, traffic management schemes such as UTMC and bus priority measures.

7.2.2 KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste has recently taken the decision to continue to prioritise crash remedial measures and to retain the successful Member Highway Fund (MHF) during the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) period (2011-16). The MHF provides each Member of the County Council with £25,000 per year to spend on small transport improvements that have strong local support. It therefore aligns closely with the Government's localism agenda. Following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, the £2.2 million a year total cost of the MHF accounts for a significantly increased share of KCC's IT Block allocation, which in 2012/13 stood at £5.2 million. The number of new IT schemes that can be delivered across Kent during this Spending Period is therefore strictly limited. As outlined in the Policy Context chapter, the County Council's IT Block prioritisation methodology splits funding between the five LTP3 Themes (budget allocation) and then focuses the investment under each Theme to those areas and locations were the challenges are most acute (spatial distribution).

7.3 Revenue Funding

7.3.1 Whilst capital funding is used by local authorities to construct and maintain highway assets, revenue funding is used to cover continuous costs, such as concessionary fares and socially necessary bus services. KCC and MBC receive most of their revenue funding for transport through the wider Formula Grant paid to local authorities by Government and through council tax. The Formula Grant covers all areas of local government spending

and is not 'ring-fenced' to specified policy areas, providing authorities with the flexibility to distribute the grant according to local priorities.

7.3.2 The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review confirmed that the Formula Grant would be reduced by 28% over the period 2011/12 to 2014/15. The County and Borough Councils must therefore seek to limit the ongoing revenue liability of their activities. This can be achieved through investment in assets with low maintenance requirements and strengthened partnerships with public transport operators aimed at improving the commercial viability of services (not least Park and Ride). KCC and MBC will also continue to work closely together to ensure that developers make a fair contribution to the cost of providing transport infrastructure and services to new developments (see below).

7.4 New Homes Bonus

7.4.1 The New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a recently introduced Government funding stream which aims to incentivise housing growth by match funding the additional council tax raised from new homes and empty properties brought back into use for the following six years. The NHB is a flexible, un-ringfenced fund based on past increases in housing supply, which in Maidstone have been particularly strong relative to other Kent Districts, with MBC receiving a total of £1.79 million in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

7.5 Developer Contributions

7.5.1 New development can place pressure on both the transport system and the environment. It is therefore important to ensure that not only the land-use strategy set out in Local Plans, but also each individual development for which planning consent is granted, is as sustainable as possible. If development does not make a fair and proportionate contribution to the mitigation of its impact on the transport network, there could be safety and capacity consequences which could prejudice the delivery of subsequent developments identified as being necessary to meet adopted housing and employment targets.

7.5.2 Developer contributions are likely to take two main forms during the period of the ITS – those negotiated under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (known as Section 106 Agreements), to mitigate the direct impacts of development, and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to mitigate its cumulative impacts across Maidstone Borough. KCC requires that the direct transport impact of all but the smallest development proposals should be assessed at planning application stage, either through the submission of a Transport Statement or, if the transport impact is likely to be significant, a Transport Assessment, to provide a basis for identifying and agreeing any required mitigation measures. These will then be conditioned on the development by MBC and delivered either directly by the developer through a Section 278 Agreement (Highways Act 1980) or by KCC through a Section 106 Agreement. Section 106 contributions may include revenue subsidies for new or existing bus services, the construction of walking and cycling routes or improvements to local road capacity.

7.5.3 CIL, by contrast, is a tariff-based approach which will be charged per square metre of additional floorspace and used to fund the strategic transport infrastructure needed to accommodate planned growth across Maidstone, as identified in the ITS. It will partially replace the existing system of planning obligations, which often causes delay as a result of lengthy negotiations. The Levy will create a fairer system, with all but the smallest projects making a contribution towards the additional infrastructure that is needed as a result of their development. MBC is currently in the early stages of developing its CIL Charging Schedule, which will be implemented by April 2014 following public consultation.

7.6 Funding and Delivery Plan

7.6.1 A Funding and Delivery Plan is essential for ensuring that a strategy is delivered cost effectively and delivers maximum benefit to its end users. It provides direction on how and when funding may become available for schemes and this in itself will assist with obtaining funding from external sources, such as central Government.

7.6.2 The Plan is set out in three columns; the first providing the action number; the second demonstrating the delivery period (split into four or five year periods); and the third providing an indication of where funding may come from to deliver these actions within their subsequent deliver periods.

Funding & Delivery Plan		
Action	***Delivery Period***	***Funding Source***
1*	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	Section 106 / CIL / IT Block
2*	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	Section 106 / CIL
3	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	Section 106 / CIL
4	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	KCC Revenue
5	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	MBC Revenue
6	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	N/A
7	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	N/A
8	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	N/A
9	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	N/A
10	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	Section 106 / IT Block
11	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	N/A

12	Short Term (2012 – 2015)	Section 106 / CIL
13	Ongoing	IT Block / KCC Revenue
14	Medium Term (2016 – 2021)	CIL / IT Block
15*	Long Term (2022 – 2026)	Section 106 / CIL
16*	Ongoing	IT Block / Bus operators
17*	Ongoing	MBC Revenue
18	Ongoing	N/A
19	Ongoing	MBC Revenue
20	Ongoing	KCC and MBC Revenue
21	Ongoing	Section 106 / CIL / IT Block
22	Ongoing	Section 106 / CIL / IT Block / Govt Grants
23	Ongoing	KCC Revenue
24	Ongoing	Section 106 / IT Block
25	Ongoing	Section 106
26	Ongoing	KCC Revenue

27	Ongoing	CIL
28	Ongoing	KCC and MBC Revenue
29	Ongoing	Section 106 / IT Block
30	Medium Term (2016 – 2021)	IT Block

Considered as one of the five primary infrastructure improvement measures to be given the highest priority

Performance Monitoring Plan

8.0 What is a Performance Monitoring Plan?

8.0.1 The purpose of any strategy is to have a means of achieving desired results. However, given the complexities and scale of the issues this strategy deals with it is often difficult to identify if the desired results are being achieved. A performance monitoring plan provides the tools to create a 'window' into the success of the strategy as the implementation of the strategy progresses.

8.0.2 The below monitoring plan is primarily made up of key targets with target dates to achieve these by. These will help to contribute to meeting the objectives of the ITS and the wider Core Strategy as a whole. In setting these targets, every effort has been made to ensure they are both realistic but also ambitious, ensuring the best possible level of service is provided to those living within the borough with the indicative funding levels.

8.1 Targets

8.1.1 **Target 1**: Increase the proportion of walking and cycling trips from 12% to 20% by 2026; an increase of 0.5% per year

8.2.1 **Target 2**: Increase car occupancy from 1.23 persons per car to 1.45 persons per car during peak periods by 2026; an increase of 1.5% per year

8.3.1 **Target 3**: Increase Park and Ride patronage from 1000 cars per weekday to 1300 cars per weekday by 2026, an increase of 2% per year or a total increase of 30% by 2026

8.4.1 **Target 4**: Reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in Maidstone by 33% by 2020 and the number of children KSI by 40% by 2020 based on 2008 figures.

8.5.1 **Target 5**: Achieve a 50% reduction on vehicle based carbon emissions (based on 1990 levels) by 2025 (EU directive)

8.6.1 **Target 6**: Reduce NO_2 levels to below an annual average of 40µg/m^3 to comply with EU directive on air quality

8.7.1 **Target 7**: Ensure that an average concentration of 200µg is not exceeded more than 18 times in a year at air quality management areas identified in the MAQAP

8.8.1 **Target 8:** Ensure all vehicles in the MBC run pool car are low emission vehicles by 2020

8.9.1 **Target 9**: Sustain a 10% bus modal share of all trips undertaken on the transport network excluding walking, cycling and Park and Ride over the planned period

8.10.1 **Target 10**: Decrease the number of journeys to schools by car for children aged 5-18 years by 10% by 2026

8.11.1 **Target 11**: Decrease the total number of journeys to school by car by 5% over the planned period

8.12.1 **Target 12**: Increase membership of the kentjourneyshare.com website by 25% each year during the LTP3 period, with a target of 8,500 members by 2014/15.

8.2 Monitoring Data

8.2.1 Data to monitor the above will be sourced from Urban Traffic Management Updates; School and Workplace Travel Plans; future modelling of traffic scenarios; bus patronage data from bus operators; data from the Police regarding KSIs and footfall surveys conducted by KCC

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Jacobs (2012), *Maidstone Option Testing Model Output, March 2012*

Appendix B: JMP (2012), *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research, Option Appraisal Report, April 2012*

Appendix C: MBC (2010), *Resident Parking Scheme Survey Report*

Appendix D: JMP (2011), *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research, Data Report, December 2011*

Appendix E: MBC (2010), *Private Spaces Attached to Commercial Premises, Oct 2010*

Appendix F: MBC (2011), *MBC Town Centre Parking Tariffs 2011*

Appendix G: MBC (2012), *Maidstone Cycling Strategy 2012 - 2026*

Appendix H: Jacobs (2009), *Maidstone Visum Model 2017 & 2026 Forecast Models South East Maidstone Strategic Link Impacts Summary, December 2009*

Appendix I: Jacobs (2011), *Maidstone Option Testing Summary Tables, March 2011*

Appendix J: JMP (2011), *Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Analysis Report, December 2011*

Appendix K: JMP (2012), *Review of Maidstone Modelling and Appraisal Work, April 2012*

Appendix L: Jacobs (2012), *Technical Note: Base & 2026 Option 1 (Do minimum) Turning Movements, June 2012*

Appendix M: Parsons Brinckerhoff (2008), *Highways Agency M20 Maidstone New Growth Point, 2008*

Appendix N: Jacobs Babtie (2005), *Maidstone Bridge Gyratory Outline Design Alignment*

Appendix O: Jacobs (2005), *Maidstone Town Centre Micro Simulation Model: Assessment of Maidstone Bridge Gyratory A229 Through Link Option*