

Policy SP3 - Rural service centres

Rural service centres (RSC)

5.36 Outside of the town centre and urban area, rural service centres are considered the most sustainable settlements in Maidstone's settlement hierarchy. The planned development and maintenance of sustainable communities underpins the council's approach to rural areas where the primary aim is to direct development towards rural settlements that can best act as service centres for their local population and surrounding rural communities. Rural service centres play a key part in the economic and social fabric of the borough and contribute towards its character and built form. They act as a focal point for trade and services by providing a concentration of public transport networks, employment opportunities and community facilities that minimise car journeys.

5.37 An assessment of population and the services and facilities available in each settlement in the borough forms part of the basis for determining the villages that can be designated as RSC. Other factors like the accessibility of the villages, their potential to accommodate additional growth, and the role each village plays as a service centre for its surrounding hinterland are also important. The following villages have been designated as rural service centres based on the above:

- Coxheath
- Harrietsham
- Headcorn
- Lenham
- Marden
- Staplehurst
- Yalding

5.38 The rural service centres are difficult to compare because they do not all share the same level of key services and facilities. However, all of the service centres have a good range of services and facilities and serve a wider community. They will continue to be focal points where improved infrastructure and the strategic location of new development will reduce the need to travel and will help to maintain and improve on the range of essential local services and facilities. It is important that the RSCs remain sustainable settlements with the services and facilities necessary to support a growing population. The following text provides a summary of the distinctive character of each RSC.

Coxheath

5.39 Coxheath has the advantage of a compact urban form and a good offering of key services and facilities to support a growing population. Healthcare services in the village are particularly strong and include two GP surgeries, a dentist, community trust clinic, chiropractic clinic and a pharmacy. However, the GP surgeries are currently at capacity and any further development in Coxheath will be expected to contribute towards ensuring healthcare facilities can meet the demands of future growth. Unlike the other RSCs Coxheath does not have a train station but it has a regular bus service which connects the village to Maidstone town centre. Coxheath also has the advantage of being in close proximity to the town centre in comparison to other RSCs, which affords good access to a number of secondary schools and other facilities.

Harrietsham

5.40 Harrietsham has the population to support key services. Provision of, and access to, schools and community facilities in the village are adequate but will require improvement with any increase in population. The village has good public transport connections to Maidstone and other retail and employment centres. There is a local aspiration for replacement almshouses to support the local elderly population and for additional retail and play facilities, which are limited.

Headcorn

5.41 Headcorn has a diverse range of services and community facilities which are easily accessible on foot or by cycle due to the compact form of the village. There are local employment opportunities and there is a local wish to ensure that existing employment sites are kept in active employment use. A regular bus service runs between Headcorn and Maidstone and the village has good rail linkages to other retail and employment centres, including London. Flooding is an issue in Headcorn as the village is surrounded on three sides by the functional

floodplain of the River Beult and its tributaries. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment advises strict controls on the location of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Lenham

5.42 Lenham has the key services and community facilities expected of a rural service centre. The village performs the best in terms of education facilities, with a primary school and nursery school located on the same site, and as the only village to have a secondary school within the village boundary. Transport links to Maidstone and other retail and employment centres by bus and rail are good. There is a local aspiration for housing development in the village to sustain the thriving village centre and local businesses in general. The need for housing is centred on young people to ensure long term sustainability.

Marden

5.43 Marden is a successful service centre, particularly in terms of employment opportunities, and also has strong key community facilities such as a medical centre, library and village hall. Marden has frequent rail connections to London and other retail and employment centres, which has created a demand for new development. This has to be balanced with the desire to ensure local people have access to affordable housing. Public transport connections to Maidstone are less frequent and require improvement. Flooding is an issue in Marden and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment advises strict controls on the location of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Staplehurst

5.44 Staplehurst is the largest of the rural service centres in terms of population and size, and has a number of the key community services and facilities one would expect, including good health care services consisting of a health centre, pharmacy, optician and chiropractic clinic. The village also has more employment providers than most of the other service centres with the exception of Marden. Current transport infrastructure in Staplehurst is good but improvements are essential to cope with high levels of demand at peak times. Local aspirations for Staplehurst express a need for improvement to highways infrastructure in line with any new large scale housing developments.

Yalding

5.45 Yalding has a number of the key services and facilities expected of a rural service centre. Retail and healthcare opportunities in the village are not as strong as in some RSCs but the village does have a local shop, post office and GP surgery. The village is served by a nearby train station and has connections by bus to Maidstone town centre, which is essential in terms of access to secondary education. Yalding also has sustainable connections to nearby Paddock Wood, which also has a range of services and facilities, including a secondary school.

5.46 The Syngenta site to the west of Yalding village is the primary site proposed for development and is a potential mixed use development site for housing and employment which affords an opportunity to improve the range of services and facilities in the service centre. It is important to ensure that safe

and sustainable linkages between the Syngenta site and the village are provided if this development comes forward. Flood mitigation measures will have to form an essential part of any development proposal in the settlement. The size of the Syngenta site offers an opportunity for a sustainable drainage mitigation approach to flood prevention.

5.47 The Water Cycle Study indicates that a number of the rural service centre catchment areas have at least some known problems with surface water and sewer flooding. It is therefore important that surface water run-off from new development does not make this problem worse. Future developments in the rural service centres should include the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) that reduce surface water run-off. To ensure consistency across each rural service centre with respect to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a detailed flood risk assessment is required prior to any development with the obvious intention of ensuring new development is located outside areas liable to flooding.

5.48 Whilst Maidstone town will be the focus for most new development, development in the rural service centres with associated infrastructure improvements is considered far more sustainable than the ad hoc growth of smaller settlements. New sites are allocated at all rural service centres for housing development.

Policy SP 3

Rural service centres

At the designated rural service centres of Coxheath, Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden, Staplehurst and Yalding defined on the policies map the council will:

1. Focus new housing and employment development within the settlement boundaries when it is:
 - i. An allocated site in the local plan;
 - ii. Minor development such as infilling; or
 - iii. The redevelopment of previously developed land that is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village.
2. Retain and improve existing employment sites and encourage new employment opportunities provided the site is in an appropriate location for, and suited to, the use; and
3. Resist the loss of local shops and community facilities, whilst supporting new retail development and community services to meet local need.

Policy SP4 - Larger settlements

5.49 Maidstone borough contains a number of settlements that have a more limited range of services than the rural service centres but still offer some services that meet the day-to-day needs of their local communities. The overall amount of development that will be acceptable in these settlements will be less than in the rural service centres as they are less sustainable locations for meeting the development needs of the borough as a whole.

5.50 The assessment of population, village services and facilities identifies three villages that can be designated as larger settlements, namely:

- Boughton Monchelsea
- Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne)
- Sutton Valence

5.51 Similar to the rural service centres, all three villages have different characteristics and there is variation in the limited range of services and facilities they provide. The following text provides a summary of the distinctive character of each larger settlement.

Boughton Monchelsea

5.52 Boughton Monchelsea lies to the southeast of Maidstone's urban edge adjacent to the scarp face of the Greensand Ridge. The settlement performs well in the audit in terms of education and childcare, with a primary school, playgroup, nursery and nearby secondary school. It performs poorly in terms of healthcare, with no GP surgery or other health care service. The village has a local shop, post office, village hall and recreation areas. Although the settlement is close to the urban area, public transport connections to Maidstone town centre are infrequent, and this is not helped by the fact that residential areas within the settlement are quite dispersed. Local employment opportunities in the settlement are also limited.

Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne)

5.53 Hollingbourne (Eyhorne Street) is a linear settlement which lies to the northeast of Maidstone's urban area in the setting of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The primary school, pre-school and one of the local playing fields are approximately 0.5km from the village centre. The village does not have a GP surgery or healthcare facilities apart from an osteopath clinic, but does have some good key facilities, including a village hall, local shop, post office, pubs and a restaurant. Rail connections to Maidstone town centre and other retail and employment destinations are good, and the village also has a regular bus service to the town centre.

Sutton Valence

5.54 Sutton Valence lies to the southeast of Maidstone's urban area on a plateau above the Greensand Ridge. The settlement performs well in the audit in terms of education facilities. There is a pre-school, primary school and the Sutton Valence boarding school, which caters for children from the age of 3 to

18. In terms of services and community facilities there are pubs, a church, a village hall, mobile library service and good playing pitches. The village has a medical practice but no dentist or pharmacy. Public transport connections to Maidstone town centre and Headcorn are good due to a regular bus service. The settlement does not have a train station.

5.55 Based on the analysis of population, services and facilities, all three settlements are considered sustainable locations for limited new housing development provided that it is of a scale in keeping with their role, character and scale. An appropriate increase in population would help to support village services and facilities. The continued sustainability of these settlements as places to live and work is dependent on the retention of local services that meet community needs coupled with the retention of adequate transport services to enable access to larger centres for those services that are not available locally.

Policy SP 4

Larger settlements

At the designated larger settlements of Boughton Monchelsea, Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) and Sutton Valence defined on the policies map the council will:

1. Focus new development within the settlement boundaries, when it is:
 - i. An allocated site in the local plan;
 - ii. Minor development such as infilling; or
 - iii. The redevelopment of previously developed land that is of a size appropriate to the role, character and scale of the village.
2. Resist the loss of local shops and community facilities, whilst supporting new retail and community services to meet local need.

Policy DM1 - Development on brownfield land

Development on brownfield land

11.1 One of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value. This is known as brownfield land and, in Maidstone, a large proportion of brownfield sites in the urban area have been developed at high densities for housing in recent years, particularly in and adjacent to the town centre along the River Medway. Making the best use of previously developed land will continue to be encouraged throughout the lifetime of this plan.

11.2 Development of brownfield land is favoured ahead of greenfield development because in most cases it is more sustainable. It is important to ensure that brownfield land is not underused and that the most is made of vacant and derelict land and buildings in order to reduce the need for greenfield land, which is a finite resource and often of higher quality in terms of landscape and biodiversity.

11.3 Brownfield development is essential for urban regeneration and if done to a high design standard it brings homes, jobs and services closer together; reduces dependency on the car; and strengthens communities.

Policy DM 1

Development on brownfield land

Proposals for development on previously developed land (brownfield land) that make effective and efficient use of land and which meet the following criteria will be permitted:

1. The site is not of high environmental value; and
2. If the proposal is for residential development, the density of new housing proposals reflects the character and appearance of individual localities, and is consistent with policy H2 unless there are justifiable planning reasons for lower density development.

Policy DM13 - Sustainable transport

Transport

11.58 Working in partnership with Kent County Council (the local transport authority), the Highways Agency, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the council will facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the local plan. An Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), prepared by the council and its partners, will have the aim of facilitating economic prosperity and improving accessibility across the borough and to the town centre, in order to promote Maidstone as a regionally important transport hub. The ITS needs to address a number of transport challenges as set out below.

Highway network

11.59 Maidstone has an extensive highway network which provides direct links both within the borough and to neighbouring areas including Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling, the Medway Towns, Tunbridge Wells and London. Four north-south and east-west primary routes pass through the town centre and numerous secondary routes run in concentric rings around the town, providing local links to the rural parts of the borough. Maidstone also enjoys good connections to the motorway network, including direct access to four junctions of the M20.

11.60 The principal constraint on the borough's urban road network is the single crossing point of the River Medway at the town centre bridges gyratory, where the A20, A26 and A229 meet. From this point, congestion spreads along the main radial approaches to Maidstone during the morning and evening peaks, leading drivers to seek alternative routes for longer journeys around the periphery of the town.

11.61 Modelling conducted in 2012 indicates that by 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 by 42%. Significantly however, background growth associated with increased economic activity and greater car ownership is expected to have over one-and-a-half times the impact on trip generation of new housing and employment, demonstrating that robust solutions to Maidstone's transport challenges are required regardless of the development proposed in the Local Plan.

11.62 Maidstone has an average vehicle occupancy of approximately 1.23 persons per car, which is significantly lower than the UK average of 1.6 persons per car. This represents an inefficient use of road space and contributes to greater traffic congestion and air pollution. Whilst it is recognised that the private car will continue to provide the primary means of access in areas where alternative travel choices are not viable, the traffic data suggests that the ITS should focus on demand management measures that enable a higher people-moving capacity over the existing road network. Specifically, the strategy should aim for a reduction in the number of single-occupancy car trips into Maidstone town centre by long-stay commuters – particularly during peak periods – which can be achieved through interventions such as enhanced Park and Ride and walking and cycling infrastructure. This approach, combined with targeted capacity improvements to strategic junctions such as the bridges gyratory, would improve the reliability and hence attractiveness of public transport, as well as providing businesses and freight operators with greater journey time reliability.

Car Parking

11.63 The provision of an adequate supply of well-located and reasonably priced car parking is essential to support the borough's retail economy, to facilitate access to areas where alternative travel modes are limited or unavailable, and to ensure that mobility impaired persons are able to access key education, employment and leisure opportunities. However, the supply of car parking also drives demand for limited road space and can therefore contribute to traffic

congestion and poor air quality, as well as making more sustainable modes of travel less attractive. Therefore it is crucial that MBC and its partners avoid an overprovision of parking, particularly in and around Maidstone town centre.

11.64 The ITS will seek address parking issues by producing a refreshed Town Centre Parking Strategy, prioritising shoppers and visitors; giving consideration to a reduction in town centre long-stay parking supply; utilising town centre parking tariffs to encourage a shift to sustainable modes of transport such as Park and Ride and reviewing the Residents' Parking Zones to ensure they are fair, simple and meet the needs of all road users.

Park and Ride

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

11.66 During the 2012/13 financial year some 400,000 transactions were recorded on Park and Ride bus services, which equates to a fall of 7% from the previous year . The Park and Ride services are also available for use by concessionary pass holders, and indeed approximately half of the trips recorded in 2012/13 were made by this group.

11.67 The reduction in patronage can be partially explained by the recession and suppressed economic activity in the town centre. Usage of the Park and Ride service should also be considered in the context of the supply of town centre car parking (both public and private) and the associated parking tariffs. The Park and Ride service is used by both commuters and shoppers; however it accounts for just 2% of all person trips into the town centre during peak periods (excluding walking and cycling), compared to 12% for bus and 77% for private car . The service currently requires a significant annual subsidy and therefore the ITS is seeking to take a targeted approach to address this situation.

11.68 The ITS is targeting the provision of an enhanced Park and Ride service, with an improved site on Old Sittingbourne Road in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and on the A229 corridor at Linton Crossroads to the south of the town, aimed at long-stay commuters into the town centre. Bus priority measures will also be provided on Park and Ride routes in tandem with the enhanced service.

Bus services

11.69 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 areas with longer distance services providing connections to many of the outlying villages and neighbouring towns, including Ashford, Sittingbourne, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and the Medway Towns.

11.70 Although KCC and the council do not directly influence the provision of commercial bus services, both authorities work closely with the operators to improve the quality of services and to ensure that the highway network is planned and managed in a way that facilitates the efficient operation of buses. This relationship has been formalised through the signing of a voluntary Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) agreement, which includes commitments by Arriva, KCC and MBC to work collectively to improve all aspects of bus travel and to increase passenger numbers.

11.71 A number of services cannot be provided commercially and are classed as socially necessary services that require subsidy from KCC. These primarily consist of school, rural, evening and weekend services, which provide access to education, employment, healthcare, or essential food shopping. KCC also completed the countywide roll out of the Kent Freedom Pass during 2009. The County Council now provides free travel on almost all public bus services in Kent for an annual fee of £100 for young people living in the county and in academic years 7 to 11. The County Council also assumed responsibility from MBC for the administration and funding of the statutory Kent and Medway Concessionary Travel Scheme for disabled people, their companions and those aged over 60, in April 2011. As the Local Education Authority, KCC also provides free or subsidised home-to-school transport to children who meet the criteria.

11.72 Through the ITS bus service frequencies will look to be increased (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre. Bus priority measures will be provided in order to encourage the use of public transport and services will continue to be made more accessible to all users.

Rail services

11.73 Three railway lines cross Maidstone borough, serving a total of 14 stations. The operator of the vast majority of rail services in the area is the south east franchise holder, Southeastern.

11.74 The principal rail route serving Maidstone town is the London Victoria to Ashford International line (also referred to as the Maidstone East Line), which includes stations at Maidstone East, Bearsted, Hollingbourne, Harrietsham and Lenham. The average journey time between Maidstone East and London Victoria is an hour and runs half-hourly. The London Charing Cross / Cannon Street to Dover Priory / Ramsgate line passes through the south of the borough, with stations at Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn. Charing Cross and Cannon Street stations are located in close proximity to the City of London and hence services on this line are heavily used by commuters, which places pressure on the limited station car park capacity in these villages.

11.75 The Medway Valley Line, connecting Strood and Paddock Wood, runs from north to south across the borough, with stations at Maidstone Barracks, Maidstone West, East Farleigh, Watlington, Yalding and Beltring. The line operates as part of the Kent Community Rail Partnership, which has delivered improvements to the stations and promoted the service widely. In May 2011, Southeastern commenced the operation of direct peak-time services between London St Pancras and Maidstone West via Strood and High Speed 1 on a trial basis. This has reduced rail journey times between Maidstone and London to 48

minutes and provided commuters from the town with the option of travelling to an alternative London terminus closer to the City. Collectively, these enhancements have contributed to a 25% increase in passenger numbers on the Medway Valley Line since 2007, putting it in the top 10 lines nationally for ridership growth according to the Association of Train Operating Companies.

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

Air quality

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

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

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

Influencing travel behaviour

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

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

Cycling and walking

11.81 Both KCC and MBC are therefore committed to the provision of a comprehensive cycle network for residents and visitors to Maidstone.

11.82 The borough currently has a number of cycle routes that link the town centre to the suburban areas; however connections within the town and further afield are limited and there is a lack of cycle parking at key destinations. Consequently, cycle use in Maidstone is very low, the 2011 Census travel to work data indicated that 1% of work trips were undertaken by bike. However 12% of journeys to work were made on foot.

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

Assessing the transport needs of development

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

Policy DM 13

Sustainable transport

1. Working in partnership with Kent County Council (the local transport authority), the Highways Agency, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the borough council will facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the local plan. An Integrated Transport Strategy, prepared by the council and its partners, will have the aim of facilitating economic prosperity and improving accessibility across the borough and to the town centre, in order to promote Maidstone as a regionally important transport hub.
2. In doing so, the council and its partners will:
 - i. Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by Maidstone's Local Plan and facilitates economic prosperity;
 - ii. Manage demand on the transport network through enhanced public transport and Park and Ride services and walking and cycling improvements;
 - iii. Improve highway network capacity and function at key locations and junctions across the borough;
 - iv. Manage parking provision in the town centre and the wider borough to ensure it is fair and proportionate and supports demand management;
 - v. Improve transport choice across the borough and seek to influence travel behaviour;
 - vi. Develop the strategic and public transport links to and from Maidstone, and connections to the rural service centres;
 - vii. Improve strategic links to Maidstone across the county and to wider destinations such as London;
 - viii. Ensure the transport network provides inclusive access for all users; and
 - ix. Address the air quality impact of transport.
3. Development proposals must:
 - i. Demonstrate that the impacts of trips generated to and from the development are remedied or mitigated;
 - ii. Provide a satisfactory Transport Assessment and a satisfactory Travel Plan in accordance with the threshold levels set by Kent County Council's Guidance on Transport Assessments and Travel Plans; and
 - iii. Demonstrate that development in, or likely to adversely affect, Air Quality Management Areas incorporates mitigation measures to reduce impact to an acceptable level.

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

Policy DM14 - Public transport

Policy DM 14

Public transport

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

2. Proposals for major development will be permitted if adequate provision is made, where necessary and appropriate, within the overall design and site layout for the following facilities for public transport secured through legal agreements:
 - i. Priority or exclusive provision for public service vehicle access to or through the proposed development area;
 - ii. Safe and convenient passenger waiting facilities, information systems and signed pedestrian access routes;
 - iii. Suitable provision for disabled access to the waiting facilities from all parts of the development area; and
 - iv. Suitable provision for disabled access onto buses from the waiting facilities.

Policy DM15 - Park and ride sites

Policy DM 15

Park and ride

1. The following sites, as defined on the policies map, are designated bus park and ride sites:
 - i. Old Sittingbourne Road (to serve the A249 corridor);
 - ii. London Road (to serve the A20 west corridor);
 - iii. Willington Street (to serve the A20 east corridor); and
 - iv. Linton Crossroads (to serve the A229 corridor).
2. The provision of new or replacement park and ride facilities should meet the following criteria:
 - i. Satisfactory access, layout, design, screening and landscaping;
 - ii. Provision of suitable waiting and access facilities and information systems for passengers, including people with disabilities; and
 - iii. The implementation of complementary public transport priority measures both to access the site and moreover along the route. Measures will include dedicated bus lanes (including contraflow lanes where appropriate), together with bus priority measures at junctions.

Policy DM16 - Air quality

Air Quality

11.85 Pollution due to dust and poor air quality, resulting from either existing sites or proposed developments, has the potential to adversely affect human health and the environment in Maidstone. It is therefore essential that these issues are adequately assessed through the development management process.

11.86 The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning policies to sustain compliance with EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. The council has a responsibility to work towards achieving these targets and does this through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime. Through this function the council has identified 6 areas currently exceeding EU guideline values and has an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in place in order to identify measures aimed at reducing air pollution at these locations.

11.87 The hotspots are located at key transport junctions but the AQAP covers the wider Maidstone Urban Area designated by the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in recognition of the nature of road networks and traffic movements. This action plan contributes to the delivery of the national air quality strategy.

11.88 The air quality action plan identifies key partners and their responsibility for delivering measures to improve air quality in the exceedance areas. The primary focus is placed on achieving modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport and low emission transport. The council's Integrated Transport Strategy is in place to address this objective. This policy will support the ITS and AQAP by:

- Promoting infrastructure that encourages the use of modes of transport with low impact on air quality;
- Locating development close to transport infrastructure and community services and facilities to minimise trip generation;
- Installing charging points to facilitate expected increases in electric vehicle ownership;
- Requiring developers to mitigate more effectively against emissions from new developments through soft measures such as landscaping and tree planting; and
- Requiring developers to contribute to funding measures, including those identified in the air quality action plans and low emissions strategies, designed to offset the impact on air quality arising from new development

11.89 The Council will review the significance of the air quality impacts from new proposals in line with national guidance. Evaluation of air quality impacts will take into account factors such as the number of people affected, the absolute levels and the predicted magnitude of the changes in pollutant concentrations, the scale and kind of the proposed mitigation. The evaluation will also take into account how the impacts from the development relate to the principles contained within the council's air quality action plan and other relevant strategic guidance documents.

11.90 It is recognised that planning can play an important role in improving air quality and reducing individuals' exposure to air pollutants. Whilst planning cannot solve immediate air quality issues, it has a role to play so any likely scheme impacts are reasonably mitigated. It is also important to ensure cumulative impacts of developments are responded to in a fair and proportionate way. In order to achieve this, a Low Emission Strategy will be developed going forward.

11.91 The Low Emission Strategy will outline the principles behind defining the scale of a development and its likely impact depending on its location and proximity to exceedance areas and the public. It will be developed in line with emerging best practice and national guidelines and be developed to support the Air Quality Action Plan.

Policy DM 16

Air Quality

Proposals that have an impact on air quality that meet the following criteria will be permitted:

1. Proposals located close to identified air quality exceedance areas as defined through the Local Air Quality management process will require a full Air Quality Impact Assessment in line with national and local guidance;
2. Proposals within or adjacent to Air Quality Management Areas that are likely to have a negative impact on air quality should identify sources of emissions to air from the development and an Emissions Statement identifying how these emissions will be minimised and mitigated against must be provided; and
3. Proposals in or affecting Air Quality Management Areas or of a sufficient scale to impact local communities should, where necessary, incorporate mitigation measures which are locationally specific and proportionate to the likely impact.

Policy PKR1 - Park and ride allocations

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

10.2 The A229/B2163 Linton crossroads is allocated for a new park and ride facility. This location is at an appropriate distance from the town centre to intercept traffic movements early enough along the A229 corridor and provide easy access to the identified catchment area. Along the length of the A229 corridor bus priority measures will help provide faster access to and from the town centre in peak times than an equivalent private vehicle journey could achieve.

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

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

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

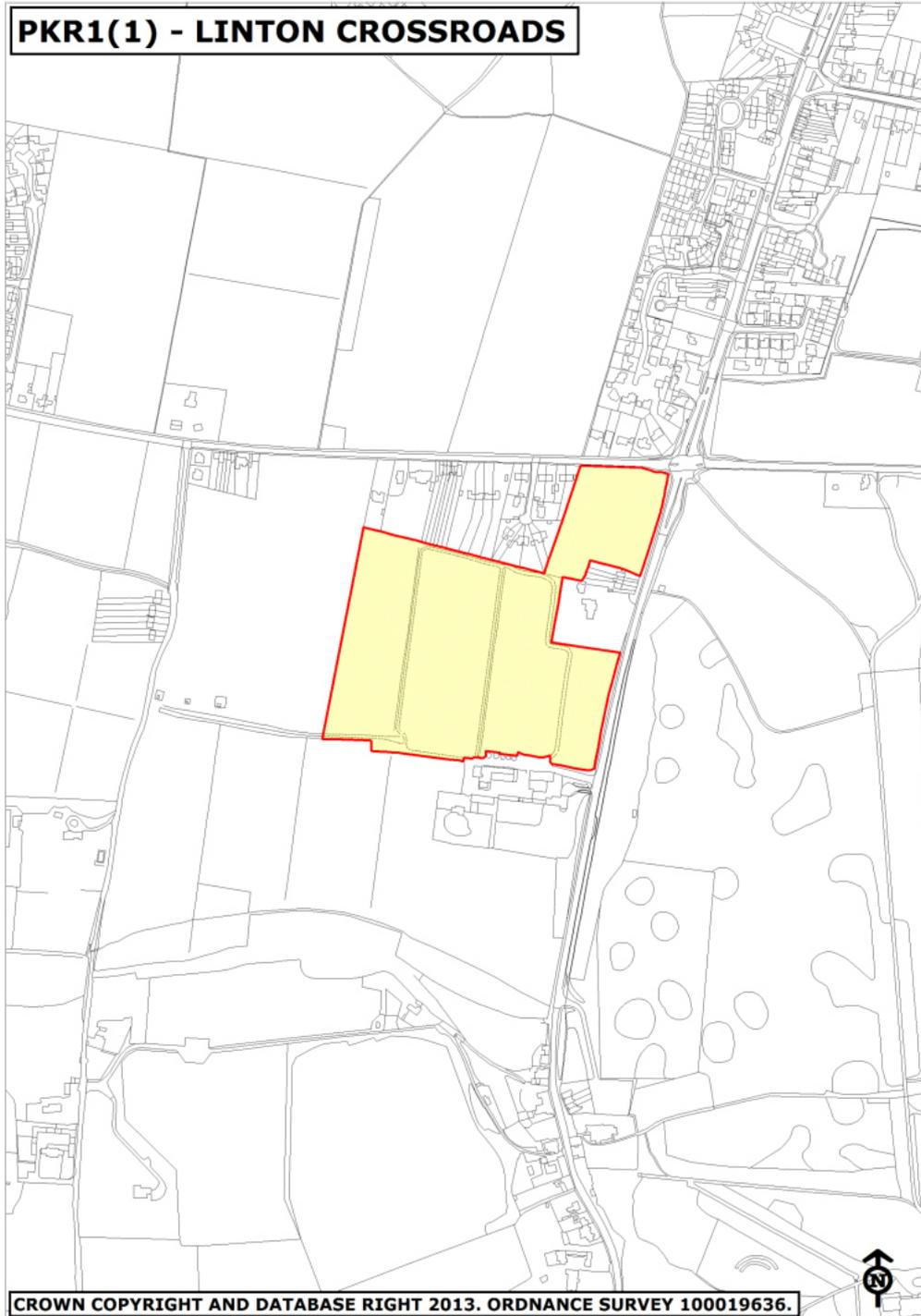
Policy PKR 1

Park and ride allocation

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

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

Site name, address	PKR1(1) - Linton crossroads		
Ward	Coxheath and Hunton	Parish	Linton
Current use	Agricultural land		
<p>Linton crossroads development criteria</p> <p>Linton Crossroads is allocated for a car park with capacity for up to 1000 spaces together with bus priority measures as defined on the policies map. Planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met:</p> <p>On site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed facility is designed in accordance with the results and recommendations of a phase one ecological survey; 2. Primary access is taken from the A229 Linton Hill; 3. Secondary access is taken, if required, from the B2163 Heath Road; 4. A structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted on the eastern boundary of the site, to provide screening from Linton Hill; 5. A structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted on the western boundary of the site, to provide screening from long distance views; 6. A significant structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted along the southern boundary of the site, to help provide screening of views from the slope of the Greensand Ridge and the Linton conservation area; 7. The terminal facility is designed to a high standard, incorporating necessary personal safety features and providing a comfortable environment for service users, including toilets and a passenger information display; 8. Directional lighting is incorporated in the car park to minimise light pollution during the hours of darkness; 9. Covered bicycle parking is provided in an appropriate location to improve the choice of travel modes for commuters; 10. Planting measures are incorporated throughout the site, to be agreed with the council, to provide breaks in an urbanising feature of the countryside; and 11. Sustainable drainage measures to minimise the impact of hardstanding on the natural hydrology of the local area. <p>Off site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Appropriate bus priority measures to be delivered northbound on the A229 Loose Road, prior to the junction with the A274 Sutton Road, to be approved by the council and Kent County Council. 			
Gross area (ha)	6.8	Net area (ha)	6.0 (approx)



Site name, address	PKR1(2) - Old Sittingbourne Road		
Ward	Boxley	Parish	Boxley
Current use	Park and ride		
<p>Old Sittingbourne Road development criteria</p> <p>Land at Old Sittingbourne Road is allocated for a decked car park with a capacity for 1000 spaces together with bus priority measures as defined on the policies map. Planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met:</p> <p>On site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted on the northern boundary of the site, to provide screening from long distance views from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; 2. Mitigation measures such as green walls are used to reduce the visual impact of the upper level of the car park, particularly from long distance views from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 3. The terminal facility is designed to a high standard, incorporating necessary personal safety features and providing a comfortable environment for service users, including toilets and a passenger information display; 4. Covered bicycle parking is provided in an appropriate location to improve the choice of travel modes for commuters; 5. Directional lighting is incorporated in the car park to minimise light pollution during the hours of darkness; and 6. Planting measures are incorporated throughout the site, to be agreed by council. <p>Off site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Appropriate bus priority measures to be delivered southbound on the A249 Sittingbourne Road to be approved by the council and Kent County Council. 			
Gross area (ha)	1.7ha	Net area (ha)	?

