

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Tim Hapgood

1. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 To consider the points raised in relation to the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and the strategic transport modelling exercise being progressed by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and Kent County Council (KCC).

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Planning and Development

1.2.1 That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny committee note the points raised in the report for discussion.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 This report has been requested by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion at the meeting on Tuesday 24th June 2014.

1.3.2 The report provides an update on the current status of the ITS, focusing on the strategic transport modelling exercise being progressed by MBC and KCC.

1.3.3 **Transport Strategy Development**

1.3.4 In January 2014 a report regarding the ITS was approved by MBC cabinet. The report provided a refined vision and objectives for the ITS and a work programme for developing the ITS in to a full draft document. The report also provided background and context to show how the ITS had developed since the previous draft went out for public consultation in August 2012.

1.3.5 The cabinet report from January has been included as a background document for ease of reference (Appendix A). However the key elements that form the transport strategy framework as stated in the cabinet report are outlined below.

1.3.6 The essential transport strategy elements include:-

- A more targeted park and ride service, with new and / or improved sites in the vicinity of M20 junction 7 and at Linton Crossroads on the A229 corridor to the south of the town, aimed at long-stay commuters into the town centre;
- Bus priority measures in tandem with the enhanced park and ride service;
- Highway capacity improvements at the bridges gyratory and at other key junctions in and around the strategic development areas of north west Maidstone, south east Maidstone and M20 junction 7, to improve journey time reliability and air quality;
- Increased bus service frequencies (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre;
- Walking and cycling infrastructure, focusing on improved wayfinding, safer crossing points at the town centre gyratory, and improvements to the River Medway towpath;
- A car sharing initiative in partnership with local employers; and
- A refreshed town centre parking strategy, which will look to increase long-stay car parking charges and reduce car parking supply to promote the use of park and ride, whilst retaining short-stay car parking to prioritise shoppers and visitors.

1.3.7 The cabinet report also acknowledged that the previous transport modelling exercise was now out of date. It was therefore agreed that new transport modelling was required based on the growth projections in the local plan in order to ensure the local plan is supported by a robust and sound transport evidence base.

1.3.8 **Maidstone Transport Modelling**

1.3.9 MBC and KCC have subsequently been working together to progress with the strategic transport modelling. The modelling work has been split in to a number of stages as set out below. The first stage is currently underway and set to be completed by the end of June 2014. All of the modelling work is being carried out to be Department for Transport (DfT) compliant and using the VISUM software package. The

transport model is owned by KCC and their framework consultants Amey are responsible for undertaking the modelling work with input from MBC.

1.3.10 **Stage 1: Refresh Base Model**

- Refresh the base model to 2014 with up to date highways, land use, infrastructure, public transport and parking information.
- Calibrate and validate the base model to ensure it represents the existing highway network and conditions.

1.3.11 **Stage 2: Produce Do Nothing Forecast Model**

- Build on the 2014 base model to produce a 2031 forecast model.
- Produce 2031 forecast base model with background growth to represent the impact of background growth on the highway network;
- Produce 2031 base modal plus local plan growth to represent a 'Do Nothing' transport scenario to show the impact of local plan growth on the network.

1.3.12 **Stage 3: Produce Do Something Forecast Model**

- Produce 2031 base model plus local plan growth plus transport strategy improvements to represent the 'Do Something' scenario.

1.3.13 **KCC Modelling Requirements**

1.3.14 Following agreement by MBC cabinet in February 2014 the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan was approved for consultation. As part of the consultation process KCC made a representation on the local plan. The representation set out KCCs own growth projections for the borough over the plan period (2011 – 2031). Following on from this KCC now wish to test their own growth projections and transport improvements within the model.

1.3.15 MBC and KCC are currently working together to understand the number of forecast model runs that will be needed and the order in which they will take place. This will in turn affect the timetable for producing outputs from the model, carrying out appraisal work and developing the draft ITS for consultation with members.

1.3.16 Appendix A

Maidstone Integrated Strategy, Cabinet report 27 January 2014