

## **Maidstone Borough Council**

### **Planning, Transport and environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 18 November 2014**

#### **Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car Stage Three – Rail Services**

**Report of:** Tessa Mallett, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At its first meeting of the 2014-15 Municipal Year the Committee agreed to carry out a review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, with the main purpose of looking at ways of easing congestion in Maidstone town centre.
- 1.2 A Working Group was appointed to develop and scope the review topic. The scoping document is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 1.3 Stage one of this review – Walking and Cycling was carried out at the meeting on 22 July 2014.
- 1.4 Stage two of this review – Bus Services was carried out on 16 and 30 September 2014.
- 1.5 The draft reports for stages one and two (Bus Services) of the review are being presented to the committee at this meeting.
- 1.6 This item is Stage three of the review – Rail Services.
- 1.7 The full draft report for all three stages of the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, will be presented to the committee at their meeting of 17 February 2014.
- 1.8 In preparation for the review of Rail services the working group consulted with all Parish Councils asking for the following information:
  - What issues does your parish have with train services within the borough that result in people using their car rather than the train?
- 1.9 Responses were received from six Parish Councils and are attached at **Appendix B**. A Response from Loose Parish Council is attached as **Appendix C**.
- 1.10 Witnesses invited to attend this meeting are:
  - Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager, SouthEastern Rail;

- Mike Fitzgerald, Chair Kent Community Rail Partnership and Medway Valley Line Group;
- Keith Harrison, Chief Executive, Action with Rural Communities;
- Stephen Gasche, Principal Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council (KCC).

1.11 Questions sent to these witnesses to help with their preparation for the meeting included:

- What are your perceptions of the where the weaknesses are in rail services in the Maidstone borough?
- What could rail service providers/planners do to relieve some of the congestion pressure in Maidstone?
- What do you do to integrate your services with other public transport services?
- How can scheduled changes be better communicated to users?

1.12 Mr Gasche is unable to attend the meeting but has sent his responses to the questions which are attached as **Appendix D**. Mr Gasche responded to the following questions:

- What can KCC do to help integrate all the public transport services?
- What can KCC do to encourage more innovative transport services?

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1 The committee are advised to review the evidence gathered by the working group to date (Appendix B, C and D) in preparation for interviewing the witnesses at this meeting.

2.2 The committee may wish to focus its questioning on:

- The feedback received from the parish councils;
- The questions sent to the witnesses as per 1.11 and 1.12 above;
- The Scoping document for the review attached as **Appendix A**.

2.3 Committee are recommended to focus their questioning on how rail services can be provided to help ease congestion in Maidstone.

## **3. Impact on Corporate Objectives**

3.1 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

3.2 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following priorities:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications.

#### **5. Relevant Documents**

5.1 Appendix A – Review scoping document  
Appendix B – Feedback received from borough and parish  
councillors  
Appendix C – Feedback received from Loose Parish Council  
Appendix D – Written response from Stephen Gasche, Principal  
Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council.

#### **6. Background Documents**

6.1 None