

Walking and Cycling Strategy Update

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Tay Arnold, Planning Projects and Delivery Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Integrated Transport Strategy and the Walking and Cycling Strategy contain policies and specific actions associated with promoting Walking and Cycling within the borough. The Integrated Transport Strategy also contains specific measurements for the success of these actions. These strategies are aligned with and interlink with the delivery of the adopted Maidstone Local Plan. Therefore it is important that progress against these actions is monitored. The main delivery partner for these actions varies, however MBC has a key role in facilitating their delivery. This report outlines the relevant actions and provides updates on the progress made to date.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the progress against actions within the Integrated Transport Strategy and Walking and Cycling Strategy is noted.
2. That the publication of the Walking and Cycling assessment (appendix 4) is approved.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Committee (please state)	12 June 2018

Walking and Cycling Strategy Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee adopted the Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy (W&CS) September 2016. The strategy brings together policies and actions to promote walking and cycling in the borough. It also supports the delivery of related infrastructure and is the evidence base for the Action Plans contained within Maidstone's Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) - specifically actions W1-W6 and C1-C13.
- 1.2 The strategy was drafted by MBC with support from Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum and Kent County Council. The Strategy is aligned with the adopted local Plan, ITS and is supported by the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.
- 1.3 In his Local Plan Final Report, the Inspector noted that "the number of vehicles is unusually high in Maidstone because of the high levels of car use relative to other modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. Measures are therefore needed to encourage modal shift in the interests of both air quality and congestion". The inspector went on to note that "to further reduce emissions, additional measures are likely to be needed"
- 1.4 Sustainable transport measures are outlined in Local Plan Policy SP23 (Sustainable Transport). Among other matters, Local Plan Policy SP23 commits to delivering modal shift "through managing demand on the transport network through enhanced public transport and the continued Park and Ride services and walking and cycling improvements".
- 1.5 The Local Plan notes that the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) 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 public transport provision on the main radial routes, Park and Ride and walking and cycling infrastructure".
- 1.6 In chapter 9, the ITS identifies various targets to monitor progress. Of relevance to the delivery of the W&CS are:
 - Target 1: "To increase walking mode share from 8% of all work trips to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031."
 - Target 2: "To increase cycling mode share in Maidstone from 0.8% to more than 2% of all work trips by 2021 and 3% by 2031."Progress against these targets will be monitored using future census data. However, this report is intended to provide a qualitative review of progress against the specific actions set out in the ITS Action Plans that support the delivery of these targets.
- 1.7 The W&CS identified four main objectives to achieve these targets:

1. *Creating new links* – seeking new opportunities to extend routes to more people;
2. *Maintenance of the cycle route network* – looking after what we already have, and improving it;
3. *Creating a safer environment for walkers and cyclists* – designing safer routes and providing road safety
4. *Spreading the word* – raising awareness of existing and emerging facilities available to walkers and cyclists

1.8 The specific walking and cycling actions within the ITS align with the above four themes. The relevant actions are:

- W1: Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.
- W2: Improve pedestrian accessibility across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre.
- W3: Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central core of Maidstone.
- W4: Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce road traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.
- W5: Actively encourage and promote walk-to-school initiatives.
- W6: Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter.
- C1: Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.
- C2: Maintain and further develop cycle routes in rural settlements connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops where new and improved cycle parking can be provided in conjunction with Action C6) to housing
- C3: MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the borough.
- C4: (a) All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Year 7-9 will have access to Level 3 training. (b) Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including workplace travel planning.
- C5: Support the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the borough; in order to ensure the Walking and Cycling Strategy and the Integrated Transport Strategy provide a coherent strategy for the promotion of Active Travel in the borough.
- C6: Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).
- C7: Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans.
- C8: Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.
- C9: Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough.
- C10: Revise and update the "Explore Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map" to extend coverage to the wider borough and indicate destinations in neighbouring local authorities. Map to be available both electronically and in paper format.

- C11: Standardise and clarify the requirements of planning applications with respect to the provision of walking and cycling facilities, to promote the use of these active travel modes.
- C12: MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.
- C13: MBC and KCC to identify locations throughout the cycle network where new automatic cycle counters should be installed to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Installation to proceed as resources allow, but each new cycle infrastructure proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process.

1.9 The main delivery partner for these actions varies, however MBC has a role of facilitating the delivery of all of them. To ensure a co-ordinated approach MBC holds regular meetings with relevant KCC officers to progress the relevant actions. MBC has also applied for funding to accelerate delivery where possible.

1.10 MBC recently commissioned a Walking and Cycling audit. This was funded from a grant from KCC which MBC applied for. The assessment was carried out by Sustrans, who are a leading sustainable transport charity whose purpose is to make it easier for people to walk and cycle. The audit and assessment included site surveys to identify barriers to walking and cycling. Existing conditions and proposed solutions were tested against tools such as the Pedestrian Comfort Level Guidance alongside the five key indicators of a good route: coherence, directness, safety, comfort and attractiveness.

1.11 The assessment focussed on the current Walking and Cycling Strategy and covered Maidstone's Town Centre and South East and North West corridors. It aimed to provide both an audit of existing provision and costed recommendations for improvements. A number of locations were also worked up to concept stage, which is an integral step in taking the routes listed in the Walking and Cycling Strategy towards detailed design and then delivery. Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum (MCCF) met with MBC officers to review the draft assessment and added valuable feedback, ensuring that the schemes included local knowledge. A route from Mote Park to Maidstone East, which builds on the route within the assessment, has already been taken through feasibility stage by KCC and funding for the next stage is currently being explored. MBC officers will continue to work with KCC and other partners to progress other schemes outlined within the assessment.

1.12 MBC has also successfully bid for technical support from the Department for Transport to progress Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans alongside 3 other Kent districts. KCC will be co-ordinating this programme. This project builds on Government's published Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS). This strategy, published in April 2017, includes technical guidance for local authorities on how to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. Approval of the scope of the project and confirmation of the delivery times are expected soon from the Department for Transport.

- 1.13 Good progress has been made against delivery of each of the relevant ITS objectives although further work is needed in some areas. A summary of actions taken are outlined below:
- 1.14 **W1 Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.** Pedestrian routes, particularly in the town centre have been considered as part of the above-noted Sustrans assessment. Enhancements to the existing provision have been suggested, including the idea of having a 20mph zone in the town centre. Delivery of these improvements will be discussed with relevant officers and funding sources identified. MBC's public realm improvement works will also greatly enhance the accessibility of the associated areas. KCC have an overarching Inclusive Mobility Action Plan for the County. This plan recognises that improvements can be made to the pedestrian and road network as well as to the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Kent, to improve access for disabled people. MBC officers will support the delivery of the associated actions within the borough. In addition to this, promotion of walking routes and improved connectivity is encouraged in the development of Neighbourhood plans. The Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan include specific requirements for pedestrian provision associated with new developments.
- 1.15 **W2 Improve pedestrian accessibility across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre.** The C&WS recommends improving the towpath to improve accessibility. This has been successfully delivered with 6.3 miles of surfaced cyclepath along the river from Aylesford to Barming Bridge. MBC contributed half a million pounds to the delivery of this scheme. The additional funds came from a successful Local Growth Fund bid as part of a joint MBC/KCC project. The route is incredibly popular and to further promote it an Explore Kent map is available. Further improvements to crossings were assessed as part of the Sustrans' audit. The assessment identified the bridge next to Maidstone East and the gyratory as the main desire line crossings for pedestrians, with the other two bridges north and south providing less utility. To improve the links over the river the audit proposes upgrading the link between Maidstone East and the Barracks stations and improving the gyratory. Discussions will be held with relevant officers to see what enhancements can be achieved. The ITS also recommends investigating building a pedestrian bridge to improve connectivity over the River Medway between Earl Street and St Peter's Street. This will be considered when an appropriate funding stream is identified.
- 1.16 **W3 Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central core of Maidstone.** An accessible and attractive town centre encourages pedestrian movement and therefore such enhancements can make a vital contribution to the success of the town centre. MBC is investing £3.1m into regenerating Week Street and Gabriel's Hill. The works will include improvements to drainage, and resurfacing with block paving to produce a level surface, similar to that carried out in King Street and the High Street in 2013. There will also be better wayfinding, more landscaping and art works. Henderson and Taylor (Public Works) Ltd have been

appointed to carry out the improvement works, which began on Monday 14th May.

- 1.17 **W4 Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce road traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.** Kent Police are responsible for collecting the crash and casualty data for the County. This is made up of the personal injury collisions that are reported and includes where: Someone is injured on a public highway or footpath; at least one road vehicle or a vehicle in collision with a pedestrian is involved; Police have been informed within 30 days. This does not include injuries to pedestrians with no vehicle involvement or collisions which occur off the highway such as on private roads or car parks.
- 1.18 KCC Traffic engineers regularly assess road safety on Kent's highway network. This involves studying crash patterns over a period of time to identify locations where there are unexpectedly high numbers of crashes occurring. The circumstances, vehicles and casualties involved in the crashes at a particular location are investigated to identify any patterns that engineering measures could prevent reoccurring in the future. The relative size of the problems and the ability to tackle them are assessed and suitable cost-effective solutions are devised and implemented. This approach looks to make changes to the road environment and influence driver behaviour to prevent collisions continuing to occur at these sites. The cluster sites are defined by 3 or more collisions happening within a 50m radius involving that user type. The borough is currently showing one pedal cycle cluster on Tonbridge Road junction with London Road. This is a new cluster and will be looked at as part of the Casualty Reduction Measures (CRM) next year. The CRM programme is intended to re-engineer the highway, where this is a contributory factor in crashes on the network. There are also 3 pedestrian clusters which again will be looked at as part of CRM. The maps showing the locations of these clusters can be seen in appendices 1 and 2.
- 1.19 Kent's Road Casualty Reduction Strategy commits the County Council to working towards an outcomes framework, in order to meet targets, reduce casualties and to improve safety and public health. Supporting this, KCC produces an annual delivery plan for coordinated education, training and publicity activities, setting out the Council's actions and encouraging partners and stakeholders to link with these. Further collaborative work with partners is needed to further understand the causes of the clusters and facilitate the success of the initiatives intended to address them.
- 1.20 **W5 Actively encourage and promote walk-to-school initiatives.** KCC has this year offered Small Steps to 8 Primary Schools in the borough. Small Steps is a programme aimed at Year 2 children and involves parents, teachers and project staff. The children are taught how to become safer pedestrians. KCC host Jambusters, through which schools are encouraged and supported to submit travel plans. Schemes such as Walk on Wednesday and Active Bug are led in Maidstone by the Kent Messenger. This year, the two schemes have been merged and are now titled 'Super WoW'. As part of this scheme families are encouraged to walk to and from school on Wednesdays. The KM charity team estimate that these schemes took a total of 22600 cars off the road in Maidstone in 2017/2018. Maidstone

borough is currently listed in the top 5 districts for this. In association with this, MBC has been working in collaboration with the KM Charity team on a complimentary initiative which encourages schools in the borough to monitor air quality around their school. St John's CEP School was the first in the county to sign up to the scheme.

- 1.21 **W6 Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter.** Columns for street signs and street furniture can prevent pedestrian movement by creating unnecessary barriers. By rationalising this, additional footway space can be created. As outlined above in W3, the public realm improvements include better wayfinding for pedestrians and a reduction in street clutter.
- 1.22 **C1 Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.** The Local Plan outlines specific cycling and walking routes for allocated sites to be delivered through developer contributions. The Sustrans Walking and Cycling assessment has highlighted areas for improvements to existing provision as well as additions to the current network, building on the routes outlined in the W&CS. Having costings for these improvements enables MBC to work proactively with KCC to identify potential funding to achieve these either from the government or developers (S106 or CIL). As part of the assessment, associated Traffic Regulation Orders were reviewed and changes suggested that would assist with the movement of cyclists through the town centre.
- 1.23 Sustrans has also previously completed an assessment of the corridor between Loose and Cripple Street in September 2016 (action SEM2 in the action plan of the Walking and Cycling strategy). Elements of this assessment have been implemented as part of KCC PROW's Loose Greenway scheme. The River Medway Towpath (action MTC9) was a joint project with KCC (further information in W2) and forms an off highway 'spinal route' through the town centre. Further connections to the towpath and potential funding options are being considered.
- 1.24 **C2 Maintain and further develop cycle routes in rural settlements connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops where new and improved cycle parking can be provided in conjunction with Action C6) to housing.** Station audits were carried out in 2016 at Lenham, Harrietsham, and Maidstone Barracks stations. These produced a series of recommendations. Improvements to rail stations is the responsibility of Network Rail and Southeastern, however ways to progress these actions have been discussed with KCC officers and regular updates from Southeastern are provided. Improvements to Maidstone East's ticket office will also enhance the experience for cyclists and include additional cycle parking.
- 1.25 **C3 MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the borough.** MBC works proactively with KCC to ensure that the cycle routes in the borough are kept well maintained. Responsibility for the maintenance is dependent on the status of the route. KCC Highways is responsible for maintaining all 'on highway' routes. This includes routes like the Towpath, which was adopted

under the Cycle Tracks Act (1984). Kent's Public Rights of Way service is responsible for the maintenance of routes which are classed as bridleways or byways. The maintenance of the National Cycle Network routes within the borough is supported by volunteer Sustrans Rangers.

- 1.26 **C4: (a) All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Year 7-9 will have access to Level 3 training. (b) Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including workplace travel planning.** Bikeability is offered to all Maidstone schools and is mainly delivered by a 3rd party provider. KCC have continued to offer adult cycle training, with Maidstone being one of the main training venues. 54 courses took place last year. Maidstone officers have met with KCC to discuss other potential training venues in the borough to further enhance uptake.
- 1.27 **C5 Support the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the borough; in order to ensure the Walking and Cycling Strategy and the Integrated Transport Strategy provide a coherent strategy for the promotion of Active Travel in the borough.** Since the Forum's relaunch in 2015 MBC officers continue to support MCCC and attend forum meetings when there is a relevant topic being covered. Recently the MCCC committee were invited to provide feedback and comments on the Sustrans' Walking and Cycling assessment.
- 1.28 **C6 Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).** As part of the planning process, well placed, good quality cycle parking is advocated. Schemes such as the improvements to Maidstone East's ticket office include increased secure cycle parking.
- 1.29 **C7 Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans.** Jambusters is a website hosted by KCC which supports businesses to develop and maintain travel plans. In addition to this, there are a range of workplace engagement programs such as Kent Sports' Workplace Active Travel Challenge, taking place between 1st May and 30th June, which encourages businesses to swap motorised transport for two legs or two wheels. This year, Activemob is working with KCC and MBC to engage with businesses in Maidstone to better understand and then overcome the barriers to travelling to work actively. MBC engage with 50 businesses in the borough per year as part of supporting the Kent Healthy Business Awards, which amongst other things encourages active travel. For a business to achieve excellence in the awards and get accreditation they need to have "a travel plan that promotes physically active ways of getting to and from work and travelling between meetings." In Maidstone, 6 businesses achieved this, although many more have made significant changes.
- 1.30 **C8 Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.** KCC host Jambusters through which schools are encouraged and supported to submit travel plans. Schools who have submitted an annual school travel plan are able to bid for capital grant funding (April to June each year) to support their delivery. Uptake of cycling in schools is further supported by the provision of Bikeability training (covered in C4).
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- 1.31 **C9 Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough.** MBC officers continue to work with partners to improve signage and promotion, including online promotion.
- 1.32 **C10 Revise and update the "Explore Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map" to extend coverage to the wider borough and indicate destinations in neighbouring local authorities. Map to be available both electronically and in paper format.** The Explore Kent map has now been updated and printed. Copies are available at locations in the borough including Maidstone Museum, Kent Life and the Maidstone Library and Archive Centre. Copies have also been offered to Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum for events. An electronic copy is available through the Visit Maidstone website.
- 1.33 **C11 Standardise and clarify the requirements of planning applications with respect to the provision of walking and cycling facilities, to promote the use of these active travel modes.** MBC officers have discussed approaches with the KCC Transport Planner (Cycling) and meet regularly with her and relevant colleagues to facilitate promoting the use of these active travel modes. The role also involves liaising directly with the KCC Transport and Development planners to advise on developments with the potential to improve or extend the cycle network in Kent. In addition, KCC planners and Highway engineers are kept fully aware of new developments in cycle route design and infrastructure. KCC Highways are also in the process of updating their Parking Standards, which will include reference to cycle parking.
- 1.34 **C12 MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.** KCC officers and MBC officers and Borough Members have supported MCCF's first Cyclefest event, which was held last year in the town centre.
- 1.35 **C13 MBC and KCC to identify locations throughout the cycle network where new automatic cycle counters should be installed to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Installation to proceed as resources allow, but each new cycle infrastructure proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process.** There are currently two cycle counters in Maidstone Borough and two walking counters. The cycle counter in Mote Park was installed in 2013. MBC has met with KCC officers to discuss potential locations in the borough that would benefit from the installation of new counters (to measure pedestrian activity as well as cycling). The siting of these counters will be dependent on whether funding can be identified. The output from the two existing cycle counters can be seen in appendix 3.
- 1.36 In addition to progress against the specific actions within the ITS, other engagement activities have also continued within the borough such as the programme of small events run through the British Cycling and HSBC UK partnership. This is the programme previously known as SkyRide. Breeze and Guided rides have taken place in the borough throughout 2017-2018. Across the county this programme has been estimated to have provided

£107,955 investment into the economy; created 299 new cycle commuters and 27 tonnes in CO2 savings.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Committee note the progress against actions within the Integrated Transport Strategy and Walking and Cycling Strategy. This will enable officers to continue progressing the agreed actions within the ITS, which supports the delivery of the adopted Local Plan.
 - 2.2 Committee chooses not to note the progress to date against actions within the Integrated Transport Strategy and Walking and Cycling Strategy. This will undermine future delivery of the associated actions within the ITS, subsequently impacting on the delivery of SP23 in the adopted Maidstone Local Plan.
 - 2.3 The committee agree to the publication of the Sustrans' Cycling and Walking assessment (appendix 4). This will provide endorsement to the improvements including within the document, allowing officers to pursue delivery of the associated schemes.
 - 2.4 Committee does not agree to publicising Cycling and Walking Assessment (appendix 4). This will reduce officers' ability to pursue the delivery of the associated schemes.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Committee notes the progress of delivering walking and cycling and agrees to the publication of the Sustrans Walking and Cycling assessment (appendix 4). This will enable officers to further progress the associated actions within the Local Plan, ITS and W&CS.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Both the ITS and Walking and Cycling strategies have been fully consulted upon prior to their adoption in September 2016.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The Cycling and Walking assessment will be published on the MBC website.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all 3 core corporate priorities. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Financial	The specific proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. Implementation of the various initiatives described in the report depends in most cases on external funding and the engagement of partners.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	There are no legal implications arising from this report	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no implications arising from this report	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services

Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Policy & Information Manager
Crime and Disorder	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Cycle collisions map
- Appendix 2: Pedestrian collisions map
- Appendix 3 : Cycle counters
- Appendix 4 : Walking and Cycling assessment

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/10353/Integrated-Transport-Strategy-2011-31-September-2016.pdf

http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/131849/Walking-and-Cycling-Strategy-2011-31-September-2016.pdf