Sharing Evidence and Information

A successful neighbourhood plan must be based on up to date evidence and an understanding of the place it relates to. Communities should therefore gather a range of evidence and local knowledge before writing their plan.

The National Planning Policy Guidance states that the reasoning and evidence informing an emerging Local Plan may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. As Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums are currently developing neighbourhood plans before an up-to-date local plan is in place, the Borough Council therefore wishes to share evidence and information in order to help enable the local neighbourhood plan team to be aware of the up to date situation.

The following information is available to Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums to help understand the local area and its needs. Additional more tailored local research may be needed to supplement the currently available information.

General Information

Area Profiles
http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles
Kent County Council has published a number of profiles for each ward in the County based on the 2011 Census. The profiles provide a range of factual information about your neighbourhood plan area.

2011 Census
https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census
The 2011 Census represents the most comprehensive up to date statistical material for your area.

Environmental Characteristics

Maidstone Landscape Character Area Assessment
http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/Maidstone%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%202012%20(July%202013).pdf
The assessment subdivides the Borough's countryside into separate character areas and assesses the distinctive qualities of each. These are broad areas of similar characteristics, but in assessing the appropriateness of development, more detailed local analysis may be needed.

Maidstone Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/90475/Maidstone-Landscape-Capacity-Study-Sensitivity-Assessment-January-2015.pdf

This assessment builds on the foundations of the Landscape Character Assessment and adds further detail as to the sensitivities of sites. Individual sites are considered in the Sites Assessment Report:
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/95150/Maidstone-Landscape-Capacity-Study-Site-Assessments-January-2015.pdf

A revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Maidstone Borough Report and Inventory Maps
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/12084/Maidstone-Ancient-Woodland-Inventory-2012.pdf

The report documents the extent and quality of ancient woodland sites within the Borough allowing the effects of any development proposals on ancient woodlands to be properly assessed in the future planning of the area.

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/landscape,-heritage-and-design/hedges
CAMPs assess the special character and appearance of conservation areas – with management plans proposing future enhancements. If part of your neighbourhood plan area is designated as a conservation area, it is worth checking whether a CAMP has been produced – and understanding what it describes as special about the area and what could be improved so that this can be taken into account in making your neighbourhood plan.

Character Area Assessments
Currently Character Area Assessments have been carried out for the London Road, Bower Mount Road, Buckland Hill area and the Loose Road area of Maidstone. The assessments describe the locally distinctive character of an area and set out design guidance. If your neighbourhood area covers one of these areas, it is worth checking what the assessment describes as special about the area so that this can be taken into account in making your neighbourhood plan.

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014 - 2019
http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/uploads/documents/Kent_Downs_AONB_Management_Plan_2014_-_2019.pdf

If your neighbourhood plan area contains part of the Kent Downs AONB, the management Plan may help you in assessing the special characteristics and qualities of the AONB so that this can be taken into account in making your neighbourhood plan.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/23060/Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-REDUCED.pdf and
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/132810/CC-005-Level-One-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-Addendum-October-2016.pdf

The SFRA provides a detailed assessment and maps of flood risk. It assesses the implications for land use planning and should help inform the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

Housing Need

Maidstone Strategic Housing Market Assessment
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/44656/Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-2014.pdf
The SHMA assesses the future needs for both market and affordable housing in the Borough up to 2031 taking account of migration and demographic change. More generally, the Assessment reviews the housing requirements of different groups within the population including older person households (including the need for sheltered, extra care and registered care accommodation); young people and households with disabilities. The Assessment also sets out indicative requirements for different dwelling sizes.

As well as the Borough-wide need, the SHMA also provides a more detailed assessment of the following sub-market areas:
- Maidstone Town
- Rural North comprising the villages of Boxley, Detling, Thurnham, Stockbury and Hollingborne which lie to the north of the M20 in the North Downs
- Rural East Sub-Market comprising the villages of Harrietsham, Lenham, Ulcombe and Headcorn
- Rural South comprising Leeds, Chart Sutton, Coxheath, Yalding, Marden and Staplehurst.

For each of these sub areas you will find a more detailed assessment of the role of the different sub-markets, the characteristics of these markets, the nature of housing demand and how this may change in the future.

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment: Maidstone
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/12085/Gypsy-and-Traveller-and-Travelling-Showpeople-Accommodation-Assessment-2012.pdf

The Study assesses the accommodation need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople up to 2026. Further information is included I the Topic Paper that accompanied the submission of the Local Plan:
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/121117/SUB-004-Gypsy,-Traveller-and-Travelling-Showpeople-Topic-Paper-May

Potential Housing and Employment Sites

Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessment
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/106962/Report-2016.pdf and
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/106963/Site-Index-2016.pdf

SHEDLAA Appendix A: Housing site assessments
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/106964/Appendix-A.1-Housing-Site-Assessments-2016.pdf and
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/106965/Appendix-A.2-Housing-Site-Assessments-2016.pdf

SHEDLAA Appendix B: Employment and mixed use site assessments
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/106966/Appendix-B-Employment-and-Mixed-Use-Site-Assessments-2016.pdf

SHEDLAA Appendix C Sites Map
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/image/0004/120856/Appendix-C-Updated-Sites-Map-2016.jpg

Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/106916/Gypsy-Site-Assessments-Summary-v2-2016.pdf

The SHEDLAA assesses a range of potential housing and economic development sites that have been put forward for development. The assessment also reviews sites for Gypsy and Travellers. By referring to the document you can identify those sites which have been put forward in your neighbourhood area and see how the Borough Council has assessed the suitability of each site for development and which sites are recommended as a site allocation in the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/121129/SUB-011-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-May-2016.pdf

The IDP is an evolving document which identifies the need for physical (e.g. transport; sewers); social and community (e.g. schools, health facilities, libraries and community buildings) and green infrastructure (e.g. sports pitches, play areas, allotments, natural and semi-natural open space) to support development of the emerging Local Plan. The location of each infrastructure enhancement is identified in the IDP so it should be possible to identify what is planned for your neighbourhood area.