

**Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)
Update**

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

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on progress made to date on the actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and associated risks to delivery, 9% of which are currently rated as having a red risk to delivery. However, it should be noted that many of these actions are ongoing rather than finite so this appraisal is based on the current situation and may change over time, depending on funding and resources, particularly in regard to those actions where MBC has a facilitation role.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

That:

1. The progress made to date on the actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) be noted.
2. Officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1 and PT2.
3. The "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2) be agreed and approved for publication.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	25 June 2019

Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)

- 1.1 This Committee adopted the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (**ITS**) and Walking & Cycling strategy (**W&CS**) in September 2016. On 12 June 2018, an update report on the W&CS was brought to this Committee. The report outlined the progress made to date on achieving the objectives within the ITS that specifically related to walking and cycling. The remaining actions from the ITS were not reported on at this time.
- 1.2 For context, the ITS assesses the principal existing and future challenges affecting the transport network across all modes, throughout the borough. It contains strategic objectives and actions to address the identified challenges, as well as targets to monitor the progress of the ITS in achieving its objectives. It is an integral component of the MBLP evidence base and is strongly interlinked with the delivery of the MBLP. It is therefore important that progress in delivering the ITS is monitored.
- 1.3 The ITS sets out five strategic objectives that are to be achieved through the delivery of a number of specific actions. These actions are grouped under six transport themes: highways; parking; Ultra-low/Zero emissions; public transport; walking; and cycling. The 5 objectives are:

Objective 1: Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices including:

- A. The development, maintenance and enhancement of walking and cycling provision, through network improvements and encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- B. The development, maintenance and enhancement of public transport provision, including Park and Ride, encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- C. Promotion and education regarding walking, cycling and public transport travel options;
- D. Ensuring that the provision of parking is fair and proportionate, considering the needs of all users, whilst also encouraging sustainable travel choices; and
- E. Place sustainable travel options at the heart of all new developments within Maidstone, to ensure a fully integrated network that puts pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the centre of any transport proposals.

Objective 2: The enhancement of strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town.

Objective 3: Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Objective 4: Reducing the air quality impacts of transport.

Objective 5: Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.

1.4 Overall, good progress has been made against delivery of each of the ITS objectives although it is reasonable to surmise that while many actions have been progressed considerably, further work is needed in some areas. Table 9.2 in the ITS identifies six targets to monitor the progress of the ITS in achieving its overall objectives. Whilst the majority of the targets have a deadline year of 2031, annual monitoring of progress in delivering the MBLP more broadly (and therefore the associated ITS and IDP) is recorded through a series of indicators as set out in the Authority's Monitoring Report (**AMR**). The AMR is published annually on the Council's website. Below is Table 9.2 from the ITS with commentary on progress towards these targets:

Target	Description	Progress comments
1	To increase walking mode share in Maidstone from 8% of all work trips to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031.	Progress against MBLP monitoring indicators M48 and M50 are reported on annually through the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is published on the Council's website. Official data on modal shift will be available through national census data, collected every 10 years – the next census year will be 2021.
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.	
3	To increase public transport mode share in Maidstone from 7.3% to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031.	
4	To decrease car driver mode share in Maidstone from 44.3% of all work trips to below 40% by 2021 and below 37% by 2031.	
5	To undertake a full and independent review of Maidstone's Park and Ride provision, issue and act upon recommendations by 2017.	An independent review has been carried out, encompassing Park and Ride, Bus interchanges and parking strategy. This was approved by SPST for publication in January 2018. Further reports were brought to this Committee in April 2018 and November 2018 and a new contract with Arriva will commence July 2019
6	To double the number of electric charging points in Maidstone by 2021 and to double again by 2031.	The provision of EV charging points is monitored and reported annually via the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) Local Plan indicator M42. The 2017/18 AMR

		records that 2 applications were granted permission with air quality mitigation measures, including the provision of EV charging points. A needs assessment study for the EV charging network in Kent has now been produced by KCC.
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- 1.5 A summary of the progress made to date against the actions are outlined below, listed in the order they appear within the ITS. The summary also includes updates of the actions previously reported in the June 2018 W&CS update report to this Committee. 9% of the actions within the ITS have been rated as red in terms of delivery, in particular actions H1, PT1, and PT2. With the remainder being 30% Amber and 61% Green. However, it should be noted that many of these actions are ongoing rather than finite so this appraisal is based on the current situation and may change over time, depending on funding and resources, particularly in regards to those actions where MBC has a facilitation role or where funding is revenue related. MBC officers will continue to work proactively and collaboratively with KCC and other providers to ensure that delivery continues for those actions rated green and to progress those actions rated red and amber.

Highways

- 1.6 **H1 Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport.** This is an integral action within the ITS and is comprised of a number of key junctions and proposed interventions set out within the ITS that collectively aim to reduce congestion on Maidstone's roads. The table in Appendix 1 details the schemes listed in the ITS under this action and shows the progress made against each one. Due to a number of complexities around scheme designs, funding and political agreement, some of the schemes listed under Action H1 have not been progressed as quickly as originally envisaged. Officers are disappointed with the overall lack of progress and have identified that renewed efforts are required to ensure the timely delivery of Action H1 and the important schemes therein.
- 1.7 **H2 Maintain and develop Maidstone's Intelligent Transport Systems and the proactive sharing of real time traffic and transport information with road users to manage congestion.** This system is managed by KCC and cameras are in place at strategic locations throughout the borough to monitor traffic flows. Based on the observations of traffic flows, KCC is able to update its Twitter feed in real time and provide links to traffic maps. In addition, roadside message signs can also be updated to reflect the current road conditions. These signs are able to show a range of information for road users, including: car park capacity/spaces; safety information e.g. messages on wearing a seatbelt; roadwork details; promotional information e.g. car sharing or litter campaigns; and incident information (this takes priority over any other messages).

- 1.8 Most signals in Maidstone are Scoot connected, allowing them to synchronise to achieve optimum traffic flow. Scoot is an effective and efficient tool for managing traffic on signalised road networks and uses data from vehicle detectors and optimises traffic signal settings to reduce vehicle delays and stops.
- 1.9 Information is also available on www.kenttrafficinfo including real time bus information, planned roadworks, parking information and traffic speed details. All of this enables road users to plan ahead to better manage congestion on the roads.
- 1.10 **H3 Facilitate and promote the expansion of the County Hall Car-Club service to meet any identified increase in demand on an annual basis.** This scheme is administered by KCC and predominantly aimed at their staff as pool cars and since entering into a new contract in May 2018, 63 KCC staff have registered to use the County Hall Car Club service and 230 trips have taken place. Average monthly utilisation based on reservations made from May to December 2018 is at 66%; with a peak of 90% in June 2018 and the lowest utilisation in August 2018 at 47%. This lower figure is likely due to the school summer holidays.
- 1.11 The County Hall Car Club has two cars that are made available for use by the general public in the evenings after 6pm and at weekends. Based on the data received from the contractor, uptake of the scheme by members of the public has been consistently growing since August although the actual numbers remain relatively low. This is potentially due to the fact that at present, the use of the cars is limited to out-of-hours availability only. Moving forwards, there are plans to use digital marketing to promote the scheme, using social media accounts such as Kent Connected and Kent Highways. Advertising materials will be provided by the contractors.
- 1.12 Discussions are also currently taking place around the idea of having a third car available for use by anyone (staff or public) at all times. KCC and MBC may look further into the risks and benefits of this idea as a potential joint venture once more information is provided by the contractors.
- 1.13 **H4 Actively promote and encourage car sharing initiatives.** KCC continue to manage the Kent journey share website <https://liftshare.com/uk/community/kent>; a free web-based service that links people making the same or similar journeys and encourages them to share their trip. There are currently over 4,700 members of the 'Kent County Council – Kent Journey Share' group. Similarly, Kentconnected.org provides an integrated, cohesive approach to the provision of public transport information; making it easy for users to plan a journey, switch their commuting mode of travel, or find information news and events relating to smarter ways to travel around Kent. This includes the promotion of car sharing initiatives.
- 1.14 Active promotion of car sharing initiatives also occurs through targeted use of road signs as mentioned under Action H2.
- 1.15 **H5 Ensure road safety education continues to be provided for across the borough.** Bikeability cycle training (levels 1, 2 and 3), Young Driver

Education and the "Licence to kill" film production continue to be offered to schools in Maidstone.

- 1.16 In addition, the Small Steps programme aimed at educating 8-11 year olds in pedestrian road safety continues to be delivered across schools in Maidstone. In 2018, 7 Maidstone schools took part in the programme, including Southborough Primary, Lenham Primary and Headcorn Primary and are likely to once again in 2019. In addition Senacre Woods Primary, Marden Primary, Oaks Academy and Molehill Primary are either currently undertaking or about to commence the course at time of writing.
- 1.17 **H6 Installation of additional electric car charging points and the promotion of electric car use.** As reported to Maidstone Joint Transport Board on 16 January 2019, work is continuing to progress in relation to the promotion of electric car use and the installation of electric car charging points.
- 1.18 MBC's Parking Services are currently engaging with electric vehicle (EV) users to identify the best charging method and operation model in line with customer expectations. Quotes for civil works undertaken by UK Power Networks (UKPN) for each proposed EV point location have been confirmed and once market testing is complete and the operational model agreed, Parking Services will place an order with UKPN for the procurement/leasing of 8 new EVs.
- 1.19 MBC and KCC have worked in partnership to successfully secure funds from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) under their Ultra Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme. The funds will enable KCC and MBC to install charging infrastructure to encourage a shift to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) for use as taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 1.20 KCC is currently drafting an Electric Vehicle Strategy to outline actions that will be taken to promote uptake in EV and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) and have recently completed the needs assessment study for the EV charging network in Kent. Additionally, KCC are also updating their Parking Planning Guidance (as part of the Kent Design Guide) to provide guidance to developers around charging infrastructure requirements in new developments.
- 1.21 As is reported on below, EV charging points are being conditioned as part of new development being approved as part of the development management process.
- 1.22 Work is currently underway to adjust the current parking on County Road, Maidstone in order to increase the amount of EV charging spaces from 2 to 4 (see Action H3).

Parking

- 1.23 **P1 Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce the overall demand for car parking.** Parking standards were introduced through the MBLP. Policy DM23 (Parking

Standards), sets out the borough's approach to parking standards for both residential and non-residential uses. This action continues to be monitored as part of the MBLP monitoring, under indicator M50. KCC are currently updating their Parking Planning Guidance as part of the Kent Design Guide too.

- 1.24 **P2 Optimise long stay parking charges to extract maximum value from parking charges, whilst controlling demand through a 50% increase in long-stay charges by 2031.** Car parking within the Town Centre is largely controlled by private operators (69%), with MBC generally controlling the smaller car parks. In 2016, it was agreed that charges for MBC long stay car parks would increase by 3% per annum (subject to review), bringing the total increase in charges to almost 50% by 2031.
- 1.25 **P3 Optimise the current level of parking space provision in the town centre.** This target seeks to ensure no net increase in the quantum of parking available in the town centre over the period of the strategy as a means of discouraging car use from current and new developments. To this end, a number of town centre car parks are allocated for residential or mixed-use redevelopment in the MBLP. These are:
- H1 (12) Union Street
 - H1(13) Medway Street
 - RMX1 (2) Maidstone East and Sorting office
 - RMX1 (3) King Street car park
- 1.26 Of the above sites, only RMX1 (2) specifically requires the reprovision of commuter parking to serve Maidstone East railway station. This is in acknowledgement of the need to accommodate commuter parking at the key town centre station for rail services into London Victoria, as well as the imminent provision of additional Thameslink services to other central London stations and on to Cambridge (see Action PT9).
- 1.27 **P4 Improve parking enforcement on highways to reduce the impact of obstruction on bus reliability.** The Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) was set up to improve and facilitate communication and decision making regarding bus service provision in the Maidstone Area. Attendance by representatives from MBC, KCC, and multiple bus operators at this quarterly meeting allows collaborative discussion of any bus related matters.
- 1.28 The issue of bus reliability is now a standing item on the QBP agenda, which has led to specific targeted enforcement campaigns in areas reported to be particularly problematic in terms of parking causing bus obstruction.
- 1.29 The formation of the Punctuality Improvement Partnership (**PIP**) promotes a joint approach between KCC, local authorities and bus operators in improving the punctuality and reliability of local bus services. This group successfully continues to work on identifying issues and providing solutions to improve bus punctuality and reliability, with the ultimate aim of increasing patronage and making bus travel a dependable alternative form of transport.

Ultra-low/Zero emissions

- 1.30 **UL/Zero Emissions 1 Encourage the provision of suitable infrastructure for ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles throughout the borough.** This action relates to the provision of suitable infrastructure for ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles in new developments as opposed to those available for public use.
- 1.31 As reported in the January 2019 Maidstone JTB report, MBC has now approved for planning application purposes an adapted version of the Kent and Medway Air Quality Planning Guidance. The guidance promotes the incorporation of EV charging points in qualifying schemes at a rate of 1 EV charging point per dwelling or 1 charging point per 10 communal parking spaces, generally secured by condition. This is a significant positive step in encouraging the use of ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles by private road users.

Public transport

- 1.32 **PT1 Provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities.** This action relates directly to schemes within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) and IDP, specifically highways improvements under schemes HTSE1 – capacity improvements on the A274 Sutton Road between the junctions of Wallis Avenue and Loose Road, incorporating bus prioritisation measures from the Willington Street junction to the Wheatsheaf junction, together with bus infrastructure improvements; HTJ75 – provision of bus priority measures on New Cut Road to include traffic signals at the junction with the A20 Ashford Road; and HTB1 – measures to improve the public transport infrastructure across the borough to deliver strategic objectives of the MBLP, the ITS and the W&CS.
- 1.33 As reported under Action H1, HTSE1 is interlinked with the main body of improvement works along the A274/Sutton Road (see Action H1, HTSE6). Due to a number of complexities around scheme designs, funding and political agreement, some of the schemes listed under Action H1 have not been progressed as efficiently as originally envisaged. Officers are disappointed with the overall lack of progress and have identified that further efforts are required to ensure the timely delivery of Action H1 and the schemes therein – a number of which relate directly to the delivery of Action PT1. KCC have agreed to apply the funds secured through S106 planning obligations to achieve highway mitigation works as deemed appropriate by KCC (in consultation with MBC) which mitigate the highways impacts of development in the A274 Sutton Road corridor.
- 1.34 **PT2 Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area.** Ensuring a frequent bus service encourages public transport use, improving passenger perceptions of the convenience and robustness of using buses. The improvements in passenger numbers driven through frequency improvements has been seen on some existing bus routes in Maidstone. The ITS lists seven key routes and specifies the frequency of bus service that should be provided (at a

minimum in the peak hours). Below are the seven routes with updates on their current provision:

- *A20 London Road – aspiration of 7-8 minute frequency.* Currently at this frequency 15 minutes (71/71A) plus 1 extra bus (72), totalling 5 buses per hour, also extra local buses for part of day as far as Allington including Nu-Venture (79A/79C).
- *A274 Sutton Road – aspiration of 6-7 minute frequency.* Currently 8 minutes on part and 10 minutes (82) plus 2 extra buses (12); totalling 8 buses per hour, average 7½ minutes - to be expanded when housing schemes progress and to be combined with the bus priority measures outlined in PT1.
- *A229 Royal Engineers Way (to and from the Medway Towns) – Aspiration of 10 minute frequency.* Currently Service 101 (Sapphire standard) is on a 12 minute frequency. Plus the hourly 155 via Ringlestone towards Aylesford, Wouldham/Peters Village and Rochester/Chatham.
- *A26 Tonbridge Road – aspiration of a 7-8 minute frequency.* Currently a 10 minute frequency (services 3 & 7) plus 1 bus per hour (6), resulting in a total of 7 buses per hour.
- *Work with service providers to upgrade service to Sapphire standard (or equivalent) and explore the possibility of extending the 6X service (Maidstone-Pembury Hospital Route) into Maidstone Town Centre.* The 6X extension was achieved during 2017/18 on an experimental basis however it was discontinued during 2018 due to low passenger numbers and traffic congestion on the A26/Tonbridge Road (including temporary road closure and route diversion due to the presence of a sinkhole).
- *A229 Loose Road – 10 minute frequency.* Currently the 82 has a 10 minute frequency as far as the Wheatsheaf junction and 4 buses per hour (service 89, every 20 minutes plus hourly service 5) as far as Linton Corner.
- *Potential to increase frequency of 89 service from Coxheath from every 20 to every 15 minutes. Potential to increase service 5 from Staplehurst to a half-hour frequency.* Still to be achieved.
- *A249 Sittingbourne Road (to and from Sittingbourne/Faversham) – 15 minute frequency coupled with the promotion and an increase in frequency of services 333 and 334 from Sittingbourne and Faversham. Work with the service providers to upgrade service to Sapphire standard (or equivalent).* Currently 2 buses per hour (79) divert to Penenden Heath via Holland Road, and 4 buses per hour (9, 333, 334) divert via Vinters Park, so the section of Sittingbourne beyond Claremont Road is almost entirely unserved. Service enhancements on the main road are possible as new developments including shopping facilities at Eclipse Park evolve.
- *A20 Ashford Road – 20 minute frequency.* Currently 4 buses per hour but unevenly spaced – 4 every 30 minutes as far as Madingford (towards Downswood), 11 hourly as far as Landway (towards Bearsted) and 10X (Stagecoach) hourly to Ashford.

1.35 As is evident, some of the desired bus route frequencies have not yet been achieved and in some cases, frequencies have in fact reduced slightly. To this end, a more focussed effort in achieving this action is required. As

discussed under action P4, the formation of the PIP provides a platform upon which to continue to work collaboratively on measures to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre.

- 1.36 **PT3 Increase the proportion of school children using the bus to get to school.** Travel to and from schools creates significant pressure on the highway network, which requires intervention to encourage alternative travel arrangements to car drop-off and pick-up.
- 1.37 KCC continues to provide the Young Person Travel Pass (for children in schools years 7 to 11) and the 16+ Travel Card (for over 16s who are in school, college or training), to encourage and promote bus travel among young people. The 2018/19 full annual cost for these passes is £290 and £400 respectively. Concessionary rates apply for the Young Persons Travel Pass if the applicant receives free school meals and passes are free if applicants are young carers, in care or are a care leaver, or if a family is applying for more than two full cost passes (the third or fourth passes are then free). Concessionary rates are also available for the 16+ Travel Card, depending upon household income.
- 1.38 In 2017, 37.9% of Maidstone's secondary school pupils travelled to school, by public bus, down from 38.8% in 2016. However, when taking into account all Maidstone Schools, not just secondary, there has been a noticeable and encouraging overall increase in use of public buses to travel to/from school from 21.4% in 2016 to 27.2% in 2017.
- 1.39 **PT4 Continue to engage with and facilitate Statutory Quality Bus Partnership schemes in Maidstone.** The Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) continues to meet quarterly and in 2018 membership was expanded to include New Venture as well as Arriva. QBP is now a recognised 'outside body' in MBC's constitution and update reports are provided to this Committee by the appointed councillor representative.
- 1.40 **PT5 Improve rail station access for pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired** Recent resurfacing works have taken place at the Maidstone West railway station car park, significantly improving the surface for all road users. At Maidstone East railway station, significant works are already underway which will include improved ticket hall access. A successful bid has also been submitted for funds to provide a raised table to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and provide improved permeability by Maidstone East.
- 1.41 KCC are currently updating the KCC Mobility Action Plan which provides best practice guidance for delivering accessibility measures.
- 1.42 **PT6 Improve the frequency and quality of bus services between Maidstone town centre, M20 Junction 7 and Sittingbourne/Faversham.** As per the update in PT2 Currently 2 buses per hour (service 79) divert to Penenden Heath via Holland Road, and 4 buses per hour (services 9, 333, 334) divert via Vinters Park, so the section of Sittingbourne beyond Claremont Road is almost entirely unserved. Service enhancements on the main road possible as new development, including shopping facilities at Eclipse Park, evolve.

- 1.43 **PT7 Provision of a North West Maidstone Bus Loop.** The purpose of the North West Maidstone Bus Loop is to connect Maidstone Hospital and the new housing sites on or adjacent to Hermitage Lane and London Road to Maidstone Town Centre along London road via a bus gate on Howard Drive, Allington.
- 1.44 Preparations are currently underway with KCC to move this scheme forward, with discussions around routing of services taking place. Funding for this has been secured through developer contributions.
- 1.45 **PT8 Promote the provision of high quality bus services from the Rural Service Centres and investigate using rail stations for interchanging facilities.** In summer 2019, KCC are launching a number of public transport pilot schemes as part of the 'Big Conversation' designed to improve the accessibility and sustainability of rural public transport. In Maidstone, services 13 and 59 are proposed to become 'feeder services' which provide more frequent journeys for the villages currently served. The services would no longer go all the way in to town. Instead, passengers would change onto frequent buses into Maidstone or Tenterden at Morrisons, Sutton Road. The new interchange will offer shelter and a real time information departure board. It is anticipated that initiatives like this will successfully contribute to an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided.
- 1.46 **PT9 Lobby Government and Train Operating Companies (TOCs) for improved rail services to Maidstone including the restoration of direct services to London Bridge and Cannon Street.** The original date proposed for the Thameslink services from Maidstone East to London Bridge, Blackfriars and St Pancras was January 2018, although this was initially to have been a peak-only service. There were subsequently three deferrals to its introduction: first to May 2018, but with the benefit of all day service on Monday to Saturday; second, to December 2018; and third to December 2019 as part of a scaling back of the delivery schedule for the whole Thameslink programme.
- 1.47 In July 2018, KCC Cabinet Member for Transport wrote to the Minister of State responsible for rail services at the DfT, urging him to consider the adverse impact on Kent's rail passengers and the local economy of any further deferral of the programme.
- 1.48 In October 2018, it was resolved at the Maidstone JTB that the Chairman would send a letter to the appropriate authority, signed by MPs, KCC, MBC, local business groups and community groups, reiterating concerns about the rail service network in Maidstone and the subsequent impact that delays to the new Thameslink service would have on economic growth.
- 1.49 It is expected that the current timetable for Thameslink services in Maidstone will be adhered to, and that the introduction of the new service to Cambridge from Maidstone East will occur in December 2019. Lobbying will continue from MBC and KCC to ensure that rail service improvements are delivered to benefit Maidstone residents and the local economy.

- 1.50 **PT10 Investigate the potential for further rail halts at Tovil, Teston and Allington.** This subject has been raised for discussion with officers at KCC and Network Rail. However at this stage no further opportunities for additional rail halts have been identified. If a third party was interested in these stations then analysis would need to be undertaken as to whether they could be added to the existing timetables. The DfT would also need to support any proposal for a new station.
- 1.51 **PT11 Improve bus facilities at Maidstone East and Maidstone West train stations to maximise interchange capabilities.** Several bus services already use Week Street and Station Road such as routes X1, 79, 101, 130, 131, 150 and 155. As part of the Tri-study (an independent review encompassing Park and Ride, Bus interchanges and parking strategy) potential improvements for buses at Maidstone East and Maidstone West were looked at. This report was approved for publication by this committee in January 2018.
- 1.52 **PT12 Improve interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station.** The Council continues to work with Southeastern, KCC and bus service providers to secure significant improvements to the existing bus interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station. Whilst outline designs have been developed, the progression to more detailed design and implementation is dependent upon the receipt of S106 funding secured from specific housing sites as allocated in the MBLP.
- PT13 Work towards an improved bus station in Maidstone town centre.** The 2017 Maidstone Tri-study report looked at options that would improve the bus interchange facilities in Maidstone, including the bus station. It deemed the bus station to be in a suitable location but cosmetic improvements are required. Since that study, architects have been appointed by MBC and feasibility design work is ongoing this work is expected to be completed later this year.
- 1.53 **PT14 Better information and marketing of public transport options and improved signage.** The website kentconnected.org provides an integrated, cohesive approach to the provision of public transport information; making it easy for users to plan a journey, switch their commuting mode of travel, or find information news and events relating to smarter ways to travel around Kent. There is also the ability to download the Kent Connected App so that users can access this information from their mobile phones whilst on the move.
- 1.54 In January 2019, Arriva introduced contactless payments on their buses in Maidstone, making it easier for people to use the buses without pre-purchasing a ticket, needing a phone app or requiring cash to pay the driver on board. This new way to pay was accompanied by a marketing campaign to highlight and promote the ease and simplicity of bus travel.
- 1.55 New Maidstone County Town signage has been erected at Maidstone East railway station to promote the prominence of Maidstone within the county and of Maidstone East as the gateway to Maidstone town.

Walking

- 1.56 **W1 Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.** An audit of both walking and cycling infrastructure in the town centre, south east corridor and northwest corridor has been undertaken. Enhancements to the existing pedestrian routes, particularly in the town centre, have been suggested, including the idea of having a 20mph zone in the town centre. Delivery of these improvements continue to be discussed with relevant officers and funding sources identified. A further audit has been commissioned looking at walking and cycling infrastructure along London Road. The completed document ("Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)") is attached at Appendix 2 which this Committee is being asked to agree and approve for publication. MBC continues to work closely with KCC officers regarding the delivery of the Active Travel and associated Action Plan. 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 MBLP and the IDP include specific requirements for pedestrian provision associated with new developments.
- 1.57 **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' Walking and Cycling Assessment. 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 this assessment 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.
- 1.58 **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 has invested £3.1m into regenerating Week Street and Gabriel's Hill. The works 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 14th May 2018.

- 1.59 **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 collisions where persons are 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 30days. This does not include injuries to pedestrians with no vehicle involvement or collisions which occur off the highway such as on private roads or carparks.
- 1.60 KCC Traffic engineers regularly assess road safety on Kent's highway network. Crash cluster sites are defined where there have been 6 personal injury crashes in the urban area (all severity - slight, serious or fatal) over a three year period and 4 personal injury crashes in the rural areas with the diameter starting at 50m. 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. This involves studying crash patterns over the 3 year period to seek out patterns of crashes in a bid to engineer/educate/enforce the likelihood of it recurring. 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.
- 1.61 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. There is currently programmed CRM works at the A229, Fairmeadow Junction with Stacey Street, Maidstone, to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities including crossings.
- 1.62 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.
- 1.63 **W5 Actively encourage and promote walk-to-school initiatives.** As reported under Action H5, KCC has this year once again offered its Small

Steps programme to 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.

- 1.64 Schemes such as Walk on Wednesday and Active Bug are led in Maidstone by the Kent Messenger. In 2018, the two schemes were 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 21,192 cars off the road in Maidstone in 2018/2019. 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.
- 1.65 **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 Action W3, the public realm improvements include better wayfinding for pedestrians and a reduction in street clutter.

Cycling

- 1.66 **C1 Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.** The MBLP 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 (through 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.
- 1.67 In September 2016 Sustrans completed an assessment of the corridor between Loose and Cripple Street (action SEM2 in the action plan of the W&CS). 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 Action W2) and forms an off highway 'spinal route' through the town centre. Further connections to the towpath and potential funding options are being investigated by officers.
- 1.68 **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.

- 1.69 **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.
- 1.70 **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 third party provider. KCC have continued to offer adult cycle training, with Maidstone being one of the main training venues. In 2018, 33 courses were offered in Maidstone (Learn to Ride – 24; Confident Road Cycling – 8; and Advanced Cycling - 1). This resulted in 68 people trained. Maidstone officers have met with KCC to discuss other potential training venues in the borough to further enhance uptake.
- 1.71 **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 the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum (**MCCF**) and attend forum meetings when there is a relevant topic being covered. The MCCF is an MBC 'outside body' and as such has a Councillor representative on it. This Committee receives update reports as part of this. The MCCF committee are invited to provide feedback and comments on relevant work streams such as last year's Walking and Cycling assessment.
- 1.72 **C6 Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).** Cycle parking is a key element of a cycle network, and the provision of secure, well located cycle parking is essential if people are to be encouraged to cycle as a means of transport. As part of the planning process, well placed, good quality cycle parking is advocated for new developments. Schemes such as the improvements to Maidstone East's ticket office include increased secure cycle parking. Unfortunately cycle parking grants are no longer available from KCC. However officers are currently progressing options for funding, to improve and expand cycle parking at key locations across the borough.

- 1.73 **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 previous years it has been possible for businesses to apply for a grant to support interventions. Unfortunately, this year funding is no longer available but KCC officers are developing a bid to obtain funding for future years. KCC have recently recruited an officer to monitor workplace travel plans for new developments. In addition to this, there are a range of workplace engagement programs such as Kent Sports' Workplace Active Travel Challenge, which encourages businesses to swap motorised transport for two legs or two wheels. Last year, Activemob working with KCC and MBC engaged with businesses in Maidstone to better understand and then overcome the barriers to travelling to work actively. As part of this work they attended MBC's One Council event in the summer of 2018. MBC over previous years has engaged 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. This programme is now no longer taking place due to changes in format and funding. MBC officers are working closely with KCC to develop an alternative approach. Whilst this action relates directly to workplace travel plans, it should also be noted that KCC have appointed an officer to monitor residential travel plans.
- 1.74 **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).
- 1.75 **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. To further support this KCC and MBC have collaborated to encourage guided rides along routes such as from the Park and Ride sites in to the town centre.
- 1.76 **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. This map is due to be updated to include the Mote Road cycle way shortly.
- 1.77 **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.

- 1.78 **C12 MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.** KCC officers, MBC officers and Borough Members have supported MCCF's Cyclefest event for the past three years, which has successfully been held in the town centre. The 2018 Cyclefest event was attended by MBC and KCC officers, the Kent Community Rail Partnership and San Fairy Ann Cycling Club and Kent Police offered free security marking of cycles.
- 1.79 **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. 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.

Conclusions

- 1.80 To conclude, good overall progress has been made to date in working towards achieving the objectives contained within the ITS. However, there are some key areas where progress to date has been limited; namely Actions:
- H1** (the targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion), **PT1** (to provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities) and **PT2** (to facilitate improvements to bus services to ensure a good frequency of service provided by high quality buses is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area).
- 1.81 To this end, MBC will continue to work closely with key stakeholders including KCC and transport infrastructure providers to deliver the actions as listed under the six main transport mode themes, with a specific focus on collaboratively working towards the advancement of the three actions (H1, PT1 and PT2) where limited progress to date has been identified. Progress will continue to be closely monitored and risks to delivery assessed. More broadly progress will continue to be monitored and reported annually through the AMR.

- 1.82 As part of the ongoing MBLP Review, the ITS will also be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to the MBLP. This will ensure the ITS continues to deliver the transport improvements necessary to support the growth and development proposed in the MBLP.
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2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Committee note the progress against actions within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. This will enable officers to continue progressing the agreed actions within the ITS in order to meet the six ITS targets, which support the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan. This Committee further agrees and approves the publication of the "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Committee chooses not to note the progress to date against actions within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. This will undermine future delivery of the associated actions within the ITS, subsequently impacting on the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.3 Committee request that officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1, and PT2. This seeks to ensure that the overall ITS delivery continues to advance in order to meet the six identified ITS targets and subsequently enables the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.4 Committee chooses not to request that officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1, and PT2. This will undermine the overall ITS delivery and ability to meet the six identified ITS targets; subsequently impacting on the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.5 Committee chooses not to approve the publication of the "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2). This would impact the ability of officers to work with KCC to further explore and deliver improvements.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that this Committee:

Note the progress against actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy.

Request that officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1, and PT2.

That the "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2) be agreed and approved for publication.

- 3.2 These recommendations will enable officers to continue progressing the agreed actions within the ITS in order to meet the six ITS targets, which in turn supports the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

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 The Integrated Transport Strategy was fully consulted upon prior to its adoption September 2016.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Officers will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to implement the actions outlined in the ITS in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the ITS and in turn contribute to the sustainable delivery of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

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 the core corporate priorities, in particular, 'embracing growth and enabling infrastructure'	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	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	<p>need no new funding for implementation.</p> <p>Implementation of the various initiatives described in the report depends in most cases on external funding and the engagement of partners.</p>	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	There are no implications arising from this report	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no implications arising from this report	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Equalities	Equalities and accessibility are clearly a key consideration of the ITS. They are given precedence in the Strategy's 5 priorities. EqIAs will be carried out as part of appropriate projects.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. .	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
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: H1 Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport.

- Appendix 2: London Road Walking and Cycling corridor assessment
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Walking and Cycling Strategy Update Report, June 2018:

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/s61066/Walking%20and%20Cycling%20Update.pdf>