

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 22 JULY 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Tim Haggood

1. Review of Transport in Maidstone Borough - alternatives to using a car - CYCLING AND WALKING IN MAIDSTONE

1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 To consider the points raised in relation to the development of the cycling and walking in Maidstone as an alternative to using the car.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Planning and Development

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

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 This report has been requested by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion at the meeting on Tuesday 22nd July 2014.

1.3.2 The report provides background to walking and cycling in the UK and also in Maidstone. It also covers the position of walking and cycling in the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and includes reference to the draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy. The report then identifies some of the barriers and opportunities for increasing walking and cycling trips based on experience elsewhere. The purpose of this is to provide food for thought and stimulate debate.

1.3.3 Appended to the committee report is the draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy for reference (**Appendix A**).

2. Background Information: Cycling in the Britain

2.1 The following is an excerpt from the 'Get Britain Cycling' report compiled by the All Parliamentary Group on Cycling.

- 2.2 Cycling in Britain is growing rapidly, but is still far lower than many other countries. In The Netherlands, 27% of journeys are made by bike, followed by Denmark on 19%. Germany manages 10%, with Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Italy and France all lying between 5% and 9%. Britain however languishes towards the lower end of the European league table, with less than 2%.
- 2.3 Some cities are performing well. Having put cycling closer to the heart of transport for decades, Oxford and Cambridge boast continental levels of journeys made by bike (17% and 30%). Across the country some local authorities are showing that by working together with communities, real improvements can be made and substantial benefits delivered to cyclists and non-cyclists alike.
- 2.4 In 2009, the six cycling demonstration towns, including Exeter and Darlington, recorded an increase in cycling of almost a third. This boost was delivered at an average cost of just £3m per town. And other cities have woken up to the benefits of cycling and have begun to catch up: in 2011 Bristol (up 63%), Manchester (up 21%) and Nottingham (up 9%) boasted of significant increases over the previous decade, albeit from low bases.
- 2.5 London boroughs like Hackney have also made extraordinary progress. The proportion of commuter trips made by Hackney residents has more than doubled in a decade (up from 6.2% to 14.6%) and it is now one of the few places in Europe where more people commute by cycle than by car (down from 21.7% to 12.4%). The number of cycles on London's main roads has more than doubled since 2000. During the rush hour there are now more bikes than cars crossing the Thames over bridges including Blackfriars, Southwark and Waterloo. The Mayor's new vision for cycling, boosting spending to around £12.50 per head annually, could be transformational.
- 2.6 Cycling is a profoundly democratic activity open to people of all incomes, men and women, young and older - each with their own style, pace and pattern of use. However, the image is frequently of 20-something, affluent men jetting to the office or riding long-distance at the weekend. The benefits of cycling - living longer, moving quicker, spending less and being happier - are true for everyone. It's time this universal appeal is made clear, and by reaching out to every community and age group across the country, we could take pride in getting Britain and Maidstone to realise its cycling potential.
- 2.7 Our vision is to realise the full potential of cycling to contribute to the health and wealth of the nation, and the quality of life in our towns and local communities. We believe this is both possible and necessary.

2.8 We need to get the whole of Britain cycling: not just healthy people or sporty young males, but people of all ages and backgrounds, in urban and rural areas. We need to change the culture of how we use our roads, so that people are no longer afraid to cycle or allow their children to do so. Our streets, roads and local communities, need to become places for people, where cycling and walking are safe and normal. Increases in cycling recently achieved by towns in Britain (even with quite modest investment), and other cities like Seville and New York, suggests that this is possible, if the funding and the political will is there. Some strong messages came from the enquiry: the need for vision, ambition and strong political leadership, including a national Cycling Champion. The Government needs to set out an action plan for more and safer cycling with support from the Prime Minister down. We need transformation of our towns, streets and communities, and to the way we think about cycling, whether as drivers or as people who might take up cycling ourselves. Our vision is for a dramatic increase in the number and diversity of people who cycle, because they see it as a safe and normal activity. We suggest that the long-term ambition should be to increase cycle use from less than 2% of journeys in 2011, to 10% of all journeys in 2025, and 25% by 2050.

2.9 The report recommendations are divided into five broad topics.

- A new priority for investing public funds
- Redesigning our roads, streets and communities
- Safe driving and safe speed limits
- Training and education
- Political leadership

3 Cycling and Walking in Maidstone

3.1 The 2011 Census journey to work data indicated that journeys to work in Maidstone by bike have increased since 2001. However the change was very small and the proportion of journeys to work by bike still only accounts for 1% of total trips.

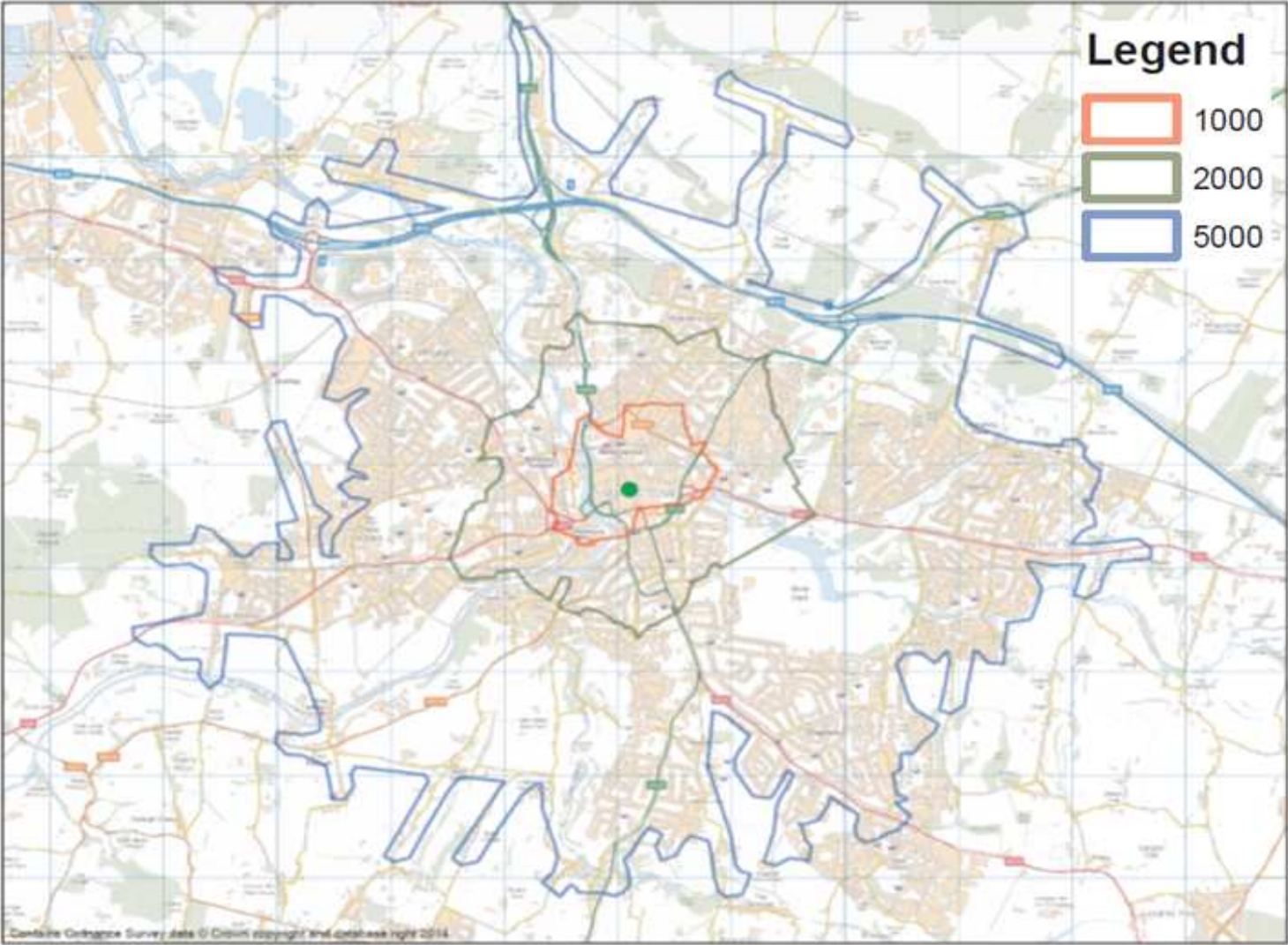
3.2 2001 and 2011 Census Journeys to Work by Bike in Maidstone

	2001	2011	absolute change 2001 -2011	% change 2001 -2011		2001 (%)	2011 (%)	% point change 2001- 2011
Maidstone	862	914	52	6%		1.2	1.2	-0.1

3.3 Data on journeys to work on foot from the 2011 Census is not yet formally available. However early indications suggest they account for approximately 10% of journeys of work in Maidstone.

- 3.4 The map below provides three isochrones projecting outward from a central point in Maidstone: the cross roads of King Street, High Street, Week Street and Gabriels Hill. The isochrones, based on accessibility through the existing road network, indicate distances of 1 kilometre, 2 kilometres and 5 kilometres.
- 3.5 Research carried out by the Institute of Highways and Transportation suggested that journeys of up to 2 kilometres were achievable on foot and journeys of up to 5 kilometres were practicable by bike. In particular the research suggested that journeys within the thresholds had the most realistic chance of replacing car journeys by trips on-foot and by bike.
- 3.6 As can be seen by the map the vast majority of the Maidstone urban area is within the 5 kilometre threshold for trips by bike and a significant proportion of the urban area is within the 2 kilometre threshold for trips on-foot. This serves to indicate the huge latent potential for increasing the proportion of trips by walking and cycling.

3.7 Maidstone Walking and Cycling Isochrones



4 Walking and Cycling in the ITS

- 4.1 Walking and cycling forms an integral part of the ITS and is covered by a number of the objectives as set out in the framework ITS that was agreed by MBC cabinet in January 2014. This includes improving infrastructure and wayfinding, through securing Travel Plans for new developments as well as schools and existing businesses, introducing behavior change projects to help influence how people travel.
- 4.2 Walking and cycling will therefore continue to be a central part of the ITS as it develops. Funding opportunities are also being pursued through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership through the Local Growth Fund (LGF).
- 4.3 The draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy (**Appendix A**) was produced in June 2012 by Maidstone officers in combination with local interest groups and cyclists. The strategy was produced by understanding the current issues and the existing network, carrying out route audits and identifies opportunities for infrastructure improvements and developing an action plan.
- 4.4 It is acknowledged that the cycling strategy is in need of a refresh and update and could potentially be expanded to include walking. Some success has been achieved in implementing parts of the strategy in particular in the provision of cycle parking in the town centre and at train stations and improved route provision along a number of key corridors. It is also acknowledged that the strategy needs to include the capacity for improving cycling education and training and establishing the links between cycling and health and access to jobs and employment.

5 Barriers and Opportunities

- 5.1 Experience from elsewhere including examples from the UK and across Europe identifies a number of common themes for delivering successful cycling town and cities. These include:
 - Personal political dedication is crucial
 - Dedicated leadership in the administration is crucial
 - Build a showcase - testing and experimenting are the ingredients for real changes
 - Take special care of intersections and crossings
 - Choose signature projects that communicates the idea of a human scaled city
 - Aesthetics matters! If it doesn't feel right - it won't work.

- Provide credible documentation and ongoing monitoring
 - Make investments for the next cyclist
- 5.2 Each town and city will have its own unique environment and challenges. However a town or city can define its own design in accordance with four simple steps:
- 1: It's about people:** Prioritise the user and how they make decisions. This is as much about politics and culture as it is about technical solutions.
- 2: People first design does matter:** The 4 C's in bicycle mobility.
- a. Consistent (a single model)
 - b. Connected (in the places where most people want to be)
 - c. Continuous (integrated but never finished)
 - d. Comfortable (details such as sheltered bike parking)
- 3: Forge Partnerships:** Enable champions across numerous agencies, disciplines, stakeholders
- 4: Measure, test refine:**
- a. Establish a base case
 - b. Test in scale 1:1 pilots
 - c. Refine the design based on opportunities and obstacles to human behavior
- 5.3 As outlined above, partnerships must be forged, and as cycling cuts journeys to work (only 50 minutes a day), there is more time for socialising which makes people happier. Cycle ways provide 90% of the capacity of a roadway for 1.3% of the cost. Significantly studies show that children who bike to school learn better regardless of whether they have had breakfast!
- 5.4 A bikeable city is a livable city; improving cycling as a means not an end. People change not when you tell them to but when the context is right.

6 Appendix A

Draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy