



Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

www.maidstonecycling.uk

Dear Party Leader / Candidate

The Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum, a registered charity, has been representing the interests of cyclists in the Borough of Maidstone for several years. The Forum's aims are to improve cycling conditions in Maidstone, encourage people to take up cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle, enable cycling as a practical environmentally friendly alternative to cars for short journeys and to reduce traffic congestion.

As a party leader for candidate(s) / independent candidate for election to the Borough Council, MCCF would be very interested to learn of your views in relation to the Walking and Cycling Strategy as published by MBC. We would also appreciate you forwarding this letter to your candidates so that they have an opportunity to make a personal response.

As Labour Leader I was instrumental in assisting in the work in preparing the Cycle and Walking Strategy. As a cyclist myself, I see the benefits for cycling in Maidstone if we get a number of core cycle highways across the Town and Borough, the Medway Towpath and Loose Greenway show how this can be done.

In particular:

Q1 Would you support the allocation of community infrastructure levy and section 106 money to implement Council approved cycle strategy?

The Labour Party believes that it is time to allocate significant S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy sums to improve the Cycling Network in the Borough

Q2 Would you be willing to work with MCCF to promote cycling and help the Council to meet its strategic aims of reducing traffic congestion and improving public health (through tackling air pollution and creating opportunities for people to exercise rather than using sedentary forms of travel)?

Definitely, Labour recognises the MCCF as the voice of the cycling community, and would do all it can to work with you to address the major issues you highlighted affecting our Town and Borough.

Q3 Are you aware of the current poor provision for cyclists wishing to cycle east to west Maidstone and the difficulties for walkers and cyclists with the Maidstone Bridges Gyratory?

Yes, as a cyclist, walker, and a Councillor for Fant, one of the issues I know of is the blockage to cycling caused by the gyratory, the filling in of the underpass at the bottom of the High Street was an act of folly. The Labour Party would like to see this area addressed as a top priority.

Q4 Will you be supporting the recommendations made by Sustrans in their Audit of the Maidstone Walking & Cycling Strategy and review of the existing Walking/Cycling corridors (Sutton Road & Hermitage Lane) which has been commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council and funded by Kent County Council?

Yes, Labour will push for all the recommendations in the Sustrans Audit to be implemented asap, using S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy sums.

Q5 MCCF has welcomed the investment made to deliver the Medway Towpath. Will you support them in their proposals to Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to improve access to the towpath in Maidstone town centre and the links between the two sections as the Maidstone section of the towpath is currently very inadequate?

Yes, Labour will support and work with MCCF to get the missing link filled in. We believe that a western bank link from St Peters Bridge to Whatman Park should also be investigated, together with other linkages to the Towpath, as that offers the opportunity to link into Fant, Bridge, South, High Street, North and Allington Wards.

Q6 Are there any other comments you would like to make in response to our questions of you?

Labour sees MCCF as a vital partner to the Council in working to get cycling on the agenda of Maidstone Council and also as a link to the cycling community to hold the Council to account.

Labour wishes you all the best for the future.

Councillor Paul Harper

Maidstone Labour Leader

Our members and the general public will be very interested to learn of your response and so we will be publishing it on 28th April on our website www.maidstonecycling.uk

Please can you email your response to info@maidstonecycling.uk

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention,

The Trustees and Board

Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum (Registered Charity 1172691)