

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 22 January 2018
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Cox (Vice-Chairman), English, Munford, Prendergast, Springett, de Wiggondene-Sheppard, Wilby and Willis

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2018 - to follow	
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public	
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Issued on Friday 12 January 2018

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PART II

To move that the public be excluded for the items set out in Part II of the Agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

	Head of Schedule 12 A and Brief Description	
15. Exempt Appendix to the Outcomes of Bus Interchange Study, Parking Strategy and Park and Ride Study, and Park and Ride Operational Review	Paragraph 3 – Information re. financial/business affairs	225 - 228

PUBLIC SPEAKING

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, please contact 01622 602272 or by email on committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting. If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk or 01622 602272. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

2017/18 WORK PROGRAMME

Report Title	Work Stream	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Review of Air Quality Monitoring in Maidstone	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Tracey Beattie	Stuart Maxwell
Planning Service Improvement Plan	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	SPS&T	06/02/2018	William Cornall	
Draft London Plan Consultation Response	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
Neighbourhood Planning Protocol	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Sue Whiteside
Innovation in MBC Car Parks	Changes to Services & Commissioning	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Georgia Hawkes	Jeff Kitson
Q3 Performance Report 2017/18	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Third Quarter Budget Monitoring Report	Corporate Finance and Budgets	SPS&T	06/02/2018	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Statement of Community Involvement Draft for Consultation	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Sue Whiteside
Local Development Scheme	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	Mark Egerton/Anna Houghton
Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	Sue Whiteside/Mark Egerton
PDR Greensand Ridge	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	13/03/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
CIL Admin and Governance Arrangements Update	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
20mph Speed Limits / Zones	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
Infrastructure Delivery Update	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	TBC
Self Build and Custom Build Register - Issues and Implications	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	10/04/2018	Rob Jarman	Stuart Watson
Local Plan Lessons Learnt	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Local Plan Delivery	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Enforcement Protocol	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	James Bailey
Affordable Housing Delivery	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
Local Plan Review Evidence Base	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Gypsy and Traveller: Need and Supply	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee
Local Plan Review and Meeting Housing Need	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee / Mark Egerton
Maidstone Integrated Transport Package	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	SPS&T	TBC	John Foster/Rob Jarman	Abi Lewis/Mark Egerton
Duty to Cooperate / Other LPA Key Issues	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
Statement of Community Involvement Adoption	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	Sue Whiteside
Employment Need and Delivery	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
Member Engagement in Pre-Application Discussions	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	
Planning Performance Agreements Review	Local Plan & Planning Policy	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC

Agenda Item 13

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2018

Outcomes of the Bus Interchange Study, Parking Strategy and Park and Ride Study, and Park and Ride Operational Review

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place/Mark Green Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Egerton, Strategic Planning Manager/Georgia Hawkes, Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement
Classification	Public Private appendices attached
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings of Maidstone tri-study - the bus interchange study, parking strategy and strategic Park and Ride study, as well as the Park and Ride operational review. The report then provides subsequent proposals that relate to the tri-study and Park and Ride operational review.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The tri-study report is agreed for publication.
2. The council invests in the bus station.
3. The proposed changes to town centre car parking tariffs shown at paragraph 1.57 are agreed
4. The proposed changes to Park and Ride pay to ride tariffs shown at paragraph 1.66 are agreed.
5. The Park and Ride service continues to be funded for 7 years and the frequency and duration of the service is improved.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Transportation Committee	22 nd January 2018

Outcomes of Bus Interchange Study, Parking Strategy and Park and Ride Study, and Park and Ride Operational Review

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Context

- 1.1 This report is separated into two main elements. The first element brings together the findings of the tri-study (bus interchange study, parking strategy and strategic Park and Ride study) and the Park and Ride operational review. The second element of this report then sets out a series of officer-led proposals relating to the above matters. The report has separate recommendations associated with both of these elements.
- 1.2 In respect of the tri-study, the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee received reports on 7th February 2017 and 14th March 2017 regarding:
 - a) A bus station options appraisal and
 - b) Maidstone Park and Ride provision and town centre parking strategy.
- 1.3 As a result of the above reports, the committee asked officers “to undertake a study to instigate preferred options to improve bus interchange facilities within the borough, with a view to incorporating future work on Maidstone Town centre parking strategy and Park and Ride study, with consideration to multi-modal journey planning and that this be conducted at a borough-wide level”.
- 1.4 Following a tendering exercise, WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff was commissioned to take forward this tri-study. Members also asked to be involved in the scoping of the study and this was facilitated by an all-Member workshop that took place on 31st June 2017. There was subsequent engagement with key stakeholders and both primary and secondary evidence was collected.
- 1.5 The tri-study report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Purpose of the Tri-Study

- 1.6 Previous reports to this committee have set out the important role that the Council has to deliver the adopted Local Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy. In particular, the study aligns with Local Plan Policy SP23 (Sustainable Transport).
- 1.7 The matters that are being considered in this report are particularly important to Maidstone Borough, which has embraced meeting future development need in the context of concerns relating to infrastructure provision, particularly transport infrastructure provision.

- 1.8 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 “the need to reduce emissions, additional measures are likely to be needed including...a review of the amount of parking provision in the town centre and its costs relative to other travel modes, especially bus travel...Park and Ride (or Park and train) may also be part of the solution if it result is fewer vehicles entering the town centre”.
- 1.9 The adopted 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”. It also notes that the Park and Ride service should be considered in the context of the supply of town centre car parking (both public and private) and the associated parking tariffs.
- 1.10 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”. The policy also commits to managing “parking provision in the town centre and the wider borough to ensure it is fair and proportionate and supports demand management”. It also commits the Council and highway authority to developing preference measures to improve journey times and reliability and make public transport more attractive, particularly on the Park and Ride routes and the radial routes into the town centre.
- 1.11 The ITS includes various proposals, including ‘Action PT13: work towards an improved bus station in Maidstone Town Centre’. Objective 1 of the strategy has regard to “Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices including...the development, maintenance and enhancement of public transport provision, including Park and Ride, encouraging uptake amongst the population;”. It also includes a target “to undertake a full and independent review of Maidstone’s Park and Ride provision, issue and act on recommendations by 2017.”
- 1.12 The Maidstone Town Centre Parking Strategy also aligns with the Integrated Transport Strategy, with Action P3 seeking to ‘optimise the level of parking space provision in the town centre’. The Integrated Transport Strategy includes a number of actions relevant to future parking provision in Maidstone Town Centre.
- 1.13 As part of the tri-study conducted by WSP, The bus interchange study sought to:
- Establish options that would improve bus interchange facilities in Maidstone (including the bus station), improve air quality, reduce congestion and reduce noise pollution, improve the quality of bus

services in Maidstone, increase bus patronage, improve ease of movement for buses and support the growth of the town

- Align with Maidstone's Local Plan as well as the adopted Integrated Transport Strategy.
- Take account of existing published evidence, produced in support of the emerging Local Plan regarding future growth, congestion and its implications
- Consider current and future population increases, potential development and its implications
- Undertake detailed scoping analysis of existing bus facilities and routes as well as proposed sites that have potential suitability for bus interchange facilities
- Focus on the link between potential future bus hubs and improvements to the existing bus network
- Generate and justify a preferred option or options

1.14 The parking strategy sought to:

- Align with Maidstone's emerging Local Plan as well as the adopted Integrated Transport Strategy
- Interpret existing evidence available to the Council supplemented by significant primary data collection
- Consider current and future population increases, potential development and its implications
- Generate and justify a preferred option or options regarding future town centre car park provision, charges and usage

1.15 The Park and Ride study sought to:

- Lead from and complement the Park and Ride operational review
- Align with Maidstone's emerging Local Plan as well as the adopted Integrated Transport Strategy.
- Assess the purpose, role and current patronage of existing facilities
- Consider current and future population increases, potential development and its implications
- Take into account and facilitate current and future potential development including highlighting opportunities for regeneration and redevelopment
- Generate and justify a preferred option or options regarding future Park and Ride provision for the borough, including means of optimising service provision, usage and income.

1.16 The tri-study report has also given clear consideration to multi-modal journey planning and assesses potential improvements to multi-modal interchange facilities at a borough-wide level, including with rail services. It has also considered out of borough patronage, including intra-urban journeys.

1.17 The tri-study report recommendations also have a long time horizon of up to 25 years.

Purpose of the Park and Ride Operational Review

- 1.18 The tri-study has subsequently been joined by the aforementioned operational review of Maidstone's Park and Ride service. This review has a shorter timeframe but has significant links with the tri-study.
- 1.19 The review of Park and Ride started in October 2016. It was carried out to look at the operational short to medium term future of Park and Ride, looking only at making the best use of the current assets used for Park and Ride within financial plans. The review has been carried out to be complementary to the tri-study.
- 1.20 The main objectives of the Park and Ride review were to:
1. Review and assess whether the current Park and Ride service offers value for money
 2. Review and assess the impact the service has in supporting the ITS, specifically in terms of reducing peak time traffic congestion and improving air quality
 3. Identify any other benefits Park and Ride delivers
 4. Ensure the review is complementary to the strategic study looking at Park and Ride provision in the long term
 5. Explore different uses for the funding and assets that are currently used for Park and Ride

Findings of Tri-Study and Park and Ride Operational Review

- 1.21 The results of the Park and Ride operational review were reported to this committee in July 2017. Details of the methods used to gather evidence for the tri-study, including primary and secondary data sources, as well as the initial outcomes of the tri-study and an update on the Park and Ride operational review were presented to an all-Member workshop on the 6th November 2017. This report does not therefore seek to reproduce the significant evidence that is contained within the tri-study report and Park and Ride review.
- 1.22 The **bus interchange study** considered 4 distinct options:
- Optimising the existing bus station
 - Alternative off-street single facility
 - Alternative on-street options (e.g. removing the existing bus station and providing for all bus services on High Street/King Street); and
 - Alternative multiple sites, creating smaller-scale 'bus hubs', e.g. at Maidstone East Railway Station
- 1.23 The study found that, in terms of origin and destination, a primary bus terminating facility is most reasonably located in the area along the High Street/King Street corridor. It also found that there were a number of benefits associated with the existing bus station, including its integration

with the retail offer, covered waiting facilities, closed bus stops until buses are ready to board and multi-directional access.

- 1.24 Whilst there are clear improvements that could be made with a new station, it is also apparent that the ability to construct a new bus station that would meet the key requirements is likely to be challenging for either the public or private sector.
- 1.25 A remote layover facility would also be an impractical solution, causing journeys of unnecessary time and distance, and resulting in higher emissions. The report recommends that if such a facility is required in the future, this could be formalised at the lower end of Earl Street, where extended layover is already known to take place.
- 1.26 In addition, providing more on street bus stopping capacity at Maidstone East is considered to be a valid option, in a street where there is less conflict with other traffic, although bus network enhancement will not necessarily depend on it. There also appears to be a continuing need into the future to provide more direct links within the urban area to Maidstone East and Maidstone West rather than prioritising services for the hinterland.
- 1.27 The report goes on to note that immediate opportunities for better integration between existing bus and rail provision are mainly focussed on information and signage, rather than infrastructure and re-timings/re-routing of bus services. In the longer-term, the development of bus services, possibly pump-primed by money from developer contributions, will be need to continue, to deliver comprehensive integration across stations generally.
- 1.28 The report notes that developments in ride-sharing and 'e-hail' mobility services could provide greater opportunities for links to rural rail stations and certain town centre stations. It also lists bus services that may have potential opportunities to provide direct connections to rail stations, potentially reducing arrivals and departures in the bus station by 5 buses per hour, resulting in 6 buses per hour terminating at Maidstone East and 2 buses per hour terminating at Maidstone West.
- 1.29 The **town centre parking strategy** finds that the overall town centre car parking supply is adequately sized to support a vibrant town centre economy. There are, however, points of stress which should be addressed to improve efficiency and the 'customer journey'.
- 1.30 In particular, it would be beneficial to reduce the duration of stay limits and/or increase car parking charging in the busiest and smallest car parking areas.
- 1.31 In the event that this town centre parking strategy is agreed by Members, the report recommends production of a more detailed implementation plan in due course, with focus on various matters, including a reduced stay limit in the defined north-east zone from two hours to one hour, reducing long stay car parking in the north-east area and a critical review of smaller car parks generally.

- 1.32 The report highlights the opportunity to reset car parking charges to a new baseline to better reflect the charging regimes of private operators and other comparable town centres. It recommends that additional revenue should be reinvested in measures to meet Integrated Transport Strategy objectives and transport related Local Plan policies, such as Park and Ride, or measures to improve air quality.
- 1.33 The report notes MBC's aging car park charging infrastructure, proposing a more pragmatic solution, such as that currently operating in Sandling Road car park. It also recommends a public and private sector increase in long-stay parking charges and re-opening a connection between The Mall and Romney Place multi-storey carparks.
- 1.34 The strategy also recommends a medium to long term approach of trip interception to the town centre at the edge of the centre itself. This includes an option to open the right turn from Barker Road into Broadway, offering a means to increase attractiveness of Lockmeadow and intercept trips before reaching the town centre. In addition, the report notes the merit in tackling the lack of current opportunities to intercept trips from the Sittingbourne Road and College Road approaches.
- 1.35 Finally, the report notes that many journeys into the town centre are repeat journeys by local shoppers with set habits. It recommends that signage should be reviewed to provide greater emphasis on the number of bays accessible on routes at major decision points/junctions and more importantly, a broader advertising campaign to encourage use of those car parks that are currently underutilised.
- 1.36 It is worth noting at this point that officers within Maidstone Parking Services are developing an innovation strategy following investigations into current and developing technologies in the parking industry. In recent years Parking Services have seen a surge in parking technology aimed at improving the customer experience; however, until now these systems have not been integrated and often provided as standalone solutions.
- 1.37 With advances in smart phone Apps and digital transformation, parking customers expect services to provide good integration with current technology and nationally this expectation has influenced the market where significant improvements have led to a convergence in technology driven by the needs of our customers. Systems can now be integrated to provide seamless and reliable services to our customers whilst contributing to improved business efficiency.
- 1.38 A report will be presented to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee in February 2018, which will outline the planned innovation within Parking Services and development of services over the next two years.
- 1.39 Among other matters, the **Park and Ride study** investigated different strategies in terms of long term requirements for Park and Ride services. In particular, consideration was given to the introduction of micro Park and Ride sites, introduction of new Park and Ride sites, and closure of the Park and Ride sites.

1.40 The analysis has led to a number of recommendations to improve the current Park and Ride services:

- Retain the dedicated bus services to existing Park and Ride sites;
- Stop P&R service 501 at Turkey Mill bus stop in both direction;
- Extend hours of operation of dedicated Park and Ride services within existing resources, if possible;
- Review opportunities to keep the Park and Ride car park open later in the evening;
- Continue to advertise and market the Park and Ride services to existing and new users;
- Review the pricing strategy to increase revenue by harmonising the off peak fares (subject to the MBC final modelling results confirmation); and
- Reduce town centre parking availability to encourage weekday commuters to park outside the town centre. Such measures could include increasing the number of resident permit zones or shortening the maximum parking period.

1.41 In addition, the report also provides a range of more strategic suggestions to be considered alongside the above recommendations and the town centre parking pricing strategy:

- Micro Park and Ride does not appear to be viable at the moment unless new sites can be identified;
- If one Park and Ride site were to be closed, it would be preferable to close London Road. Retaining Willington Street Park and Ride in combination to increasing parking fares in Maidstone town centre could significantly reduce the current subsidy required to operate Park and Ride;
- The past performance of Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site demonstrated a greater demand than for both existing Park and Ride sites; thus a site near the former Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site location might be considered in the future;
- Introduction of a new Park and Ride site directly north of Maidstone to cater for the A229 traffic would address the most heavily used corridor into the Town Centre. This could be envisaged in the Invicta Park site which is planned to be redeveloped within the Borough Local Plan time frame.

1.42 The **Park and Ride operational review** initially reported to SPST committee in July. It found that the current model of Park and Ride did not provide value for money for the £242,000 per year it costs the council to run the service once costs and income are taken into account. This is because, whilst the service is used by about 800 people every day and is valued by users, it is not particularly effective in delivering the Integrated Transport Strategy objectives of reducing peak time congestion and improving air quality: it only takes about 170 cars off the road during the morning and evening peak time traffic periods. The review also found that Maidstone's Park and Ride ran less frequently and finished earlier than all the other services the review considered. However, in spite of the issues, the review noted the opportunity for greater utilisation of the service and,

therefore, greater contribution towards the ITS. Additionally, the review did not find any other option for use of the current assets and finances that would contribute to the objectives of the ITS any better.

1.43 Since July, the following actions have been undertaken:

- Tender exercise for Park and Ride service
- Further survey with users and non-users of Park and Ride regarding potential changes to the charging structure and possible changes to the service
- Survey of town centre businesses
- Additional financial modelling, including review of pay to park and pay to ride payment models

1.44 The key findings from these additional pieces of work are:

1. An additional bus would be required to increase the bus frequency to every 15 minutes, which makes the contract cost more expensive than for 20 min intervals.
2. A move to pay to park could lead to about 1/4 of concessionary fares travellers and other off-peak travellers no longer using the service. Off-peak and concessionary fares income make up about 2/3 of the total Park and Ride income. This makes pay to park a riskier proposition than retaining a pay to ride model.
3. Only 15% of current Park and Ride users and 27% of non-users said that pay to park would make them more likely to car share. Those travelling using standard tickets and those who use Park and Ride once a month or less were most likely to say they might car share.
4. People are more likely to pay more for buses that run more frequently.
5. Most users are happy with buses that run at 20 minute intervals but non-users think buses should run at 15 or 10 minute intervals in order to meet their needs.
6. People are generally prepared to pay more for peak travel than non-peak travel.
7. There is a demand from both users and non-users for buses to run later into the evening.
8. Both users and non-users think the two most important things for a good Park and Ride service are:
 - Frequent buses
 - Cheaper than town centre parking
9. The things that are most likely to make non-users consider using Park and Ride are:
 - Payment by card
 - Real time travel information
 - Payment by app
10. About 1/4 of non-users who responded to the survey would consider using Park and Ride in the future. The results also suggest that pay to park or group travel tickets would be more attractive to non-users than every passenger in the car paying to ride the bus.
11. Most businesses don't have parking for their staff or offer any travel concessions. Of those that do offer staff parking, the majority have this included in their lease or own the spaces.

1.45 In conclusion, it is clear from the research carried out that the current service requires improvement and is unlikely to attract many new users on its own merits because:

- Buses do not run frequently enough
- The service finishes too early
- The cost of travel is not cheap enough compared to parking in the town centre, particularly for people who travel with more than one person in a car
- Passengers cannot pay by card
- Buses are older and not of a high enough environmental specification

Current Proposals

1.46 Many of the recommendations from the tri-study will be implemented over the coming years and inform future reviews of the Integrated Transport Strategy and Local Plan, for example. However, officers have also generated proposals from the recommendations contained within tri-study and operational review of Park and Ride.

1.47 Initial proposals were presented at an all-Member briefing on 8th January 2018 and it is clear that, in order to contribute to a successful ITS, Park and Ride cannot be considered in isolation.

Bus Station Proposal

1.48 With the focus on the existing bus station and a clear need to improve the quality of offer it is apparent that Maidstone Borough Council has a role to seek improvements. The ITS reinforces this approach.

1.49 It is apparent that improvements are unlikely to come from a single source, given that key stakeholder interest in the bus station and its operation is shared by the Council, the landowner (Capital and Regional) and the bus operators. It is proposed for the Council to take a lead role in negotiations with the other key stakeholders with the aim of making improvements to its attractiveness and ease of use.

1.50 Ultimately, significant financial contributions will be required to make meaningful improvements to the bus station. Once again, an approach where responsibility for bringing forward finances is shared between the Council, the landowner and the bus-operator is likely to maximise the possible improvements.

1.51 Whilst the level of financial contributions will need to be justified once improvement proposals have been established, the Council itself is likely to be asked for a financial contribution to the improvements. A potential source of funding is subsidy from parking revenue and work will also be undertaken to identify other potential sources, including Maidstone's Community Infrastructure Levy, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the new homes bonus.

Town Centre Car Parking Charges Proposal

1.52 Currently, the Pay and Display tariff structure is broadly consistent across all car parks and does not consider a variable tariff structure based on location and demand, other than a few exceptions such as King Street and Palace Avenue. In order to tackle the issues around the significant demand in the car parks to the north east of the town centre (this includes King Street, Wheeler Street, Brewer Street, Union Street East/West and Brooks Place) it is therefore recommended that tariffs reflect location demand and are set at a level to achieve occupancy levels of approximately 85%, which is the industry standard to provide good levels of bay turnover and parking availability.

1.53 Town centre Pay and Display parking is considered to be low-priced particularly for longer stays, as the current tariff structure reduces the hourly rate for a longer the period of stay.

1.54 The findings of the town centre parking survey carried out by WSP identified an imbalance between the town centre parking charges and the Park and Ride service. This imbalance favours Pay and Display parking making a successful Park and Ride service more difficult to achieve. When compared to the Park & Ride charge, town centre Pay and Display parking can offer a much cheaper alternative to Park and Ride when car occupancy exceeds more than one:

3 Hour stay

Number of occupants	Pay & Display	Park & Ride Peak	Park & Ride Off Peak
1	£2.50	£2.60	£1.60
2	£2.50	£5.20	£3.20
3	£2.50	£7.80	£4.80
4	£2.50	£10.40	£6.40

4 Hour stay

Number of occupants	Pay & Display	Park & Ride Peak	Park & Ride Off Peak
1	£3.50 / £4.00	£2.60	£1.60
2	£3.50 / £4.00	£5.20	£3.20
3	£3.50 / £4.00	£7.80	£4.80
4	£3.50 / £4.00	£10.40	£6.40

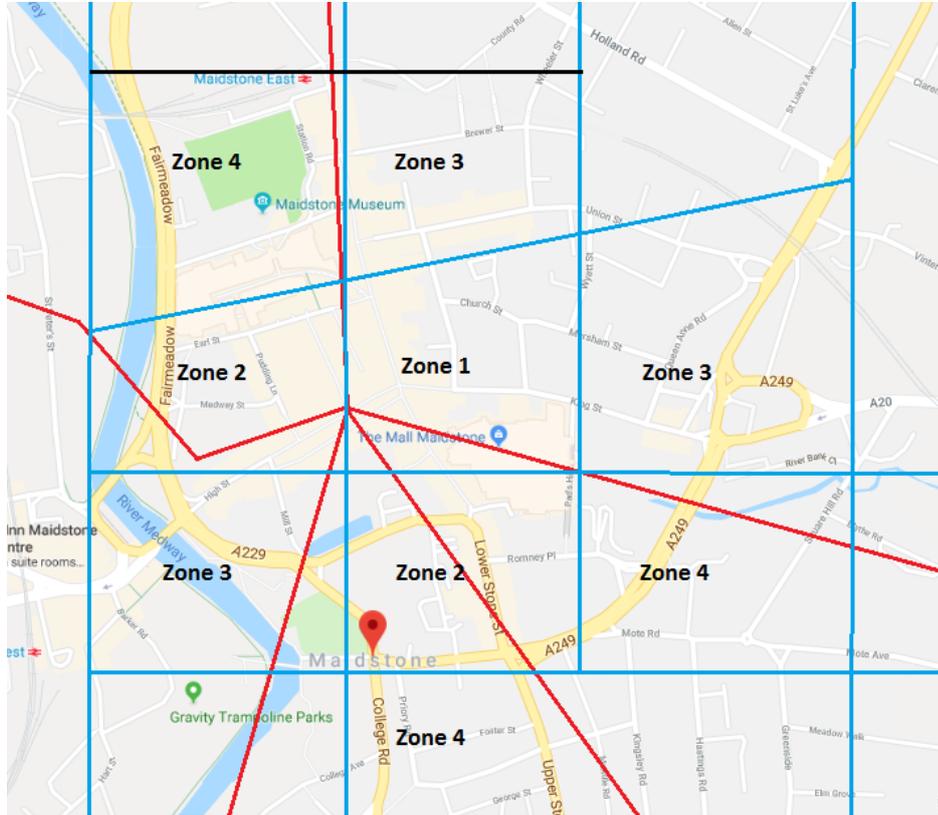
Over 5 Hour stay

Number of occupants	Pay & Display	Park & Ride Peak	Park & Ride Off Peak
1	£6.50	£2.60	£1.60
2	£6.50	£5.20	£3.20
3	£6.50	£7.80	£4.80
4	£6.50	£10.40	£6.40

1.55 In order to increase use of Park and Ride, which supports delivery of the Integrated Transport Strategy, the Local Plan and the Low Emissions Strategy, it is clear this situation needs to change: it should be substantially

cheaper to use Park and Ride than to drive into town and park for 4 or more hours.

1.56 Parking Services have considered the survey data and identified four zones based on parking demand and location to town centre facilities.



1.57 The current Pay and Display tariff has also been reviewed and proposals within this report provide a consistent hourly rate within the existing time bands specific to each zone:

Zone 1		1		3	4	King St			
	Current	£1.30	>	£3.90	£5.20				
	Var	£1.50	>	£2.50	£4.00				
		-£0.20		£1.40	£1.20				
Zone 2		1		3	4	Medway Palace			
	Current	£1.25	>	£3.75	£5.00				
	Var	£1.50	>	£2.50	£4.00				
		-£0.25		£1.25	£1.00				
Zone 3		30 min	1		3	4	5	over 5	Brewer Wheeler
	Current	£0.60	£1.10	>	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£7.00	Lucerne Union W Union E
	Var	£0.50	£1.00	>	£2.50	£3.50	£5.00	£6.50	Brooks Sitting'ne Barker Lockm'dw
		£0.10	£0.10		£0.80	£0.90	£0.50	£0.50	
Zone 4		1		3	4	5	over 5	Mill Mote	
	Current	£1.00	>	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£7.00	College Bruns'k Well	
	Var	£1.00	>	£2.50	£3.50	£5.00	£6.50		
		£0.00		£0.50	£0.50	£0.00	£0.50		
On-St		30 Mins	1	1.5	2	All			
	Current	£0.80	£1.50	£2.25	£3.00				
	Var	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50				
		£0.10	£0.00	£0.25	£0.50				
	Current Tariff							Sandling	
	No changes							JWW	

1.58 This tariff proposal allows a reduction in charges for stays of one hour in both Zone 1 and Zone 2 where demand is high to enable short period visits to be maintained to support local business.

1.59 The hourly tariff has been applied consistently throughout each time band providing a reasonable level of parking charges whilst promoting migration from high demand car parks to outer zone car parks and Park and Ride where reduced demand has been identified.

1.60 The proposed tariff structure provides improved harmony between town centre parking charges and the Park and Ride service, particularly if discounted group travel options are implemented for Park & Ride customers.

1.61 The proposed tariff changes should also promote the use of alternative transport methods or a shift to lower demand car parks instead of the car parks identified by WSP as having more demand than spaces. This will lower strain on the worst affected car parks and reduce congestion caused by vehicles unable to find spaces, especially during peak hours.

1.62 Customer migration to outer zone car parks and to Park and Ride for longer stays are likely, however accurate projections to the level of migration are not possible and therefore the income projections below are based on 0% migration to 20% to alternative methods of travel into the town centre:

	Increased Income	Increased Income excluding VAT	VAT
0%	407,064.90	339,220.75	67,844.15
-10%	238,007.55	198,339.63	39,667.93
-15%	151,259.53	126,049.61	25,209.92
-20%	64,511.50	53,759.58	10,751.92

1.63 The tariff proposals support budgeted income expectations and identify that a -10% variation in pay and display customers will still result in additional income of £198,340. This could be used to invest into Park and Ride to cover any shortfall between the cost of delivery of an improved service and the income achieved from Park and Ride ticket sales.

1.64 Although impossible to predict accurately, it is important to consider that a percentage of migrating customers are likely to transfer to the Park & Ride service resulting in improved passenger income.

Park and Ride Proposal

1.65 The recommendation is to continue to run the Park and Ride service by accepting the best tender return for running the service at 15 minute intervals. This includes new more environmentally friendly buses, a more frequent service and cashless payment facilities. This fits with the council's Local Plan policy of continuing with a Park and Ride service and improves the service, making it fit for purpose. Officers will also engage with the intended provider about the cost of running the service up to 7pm. We know this would cost about £34,000 under the current contract, so costs are expected to be similar to this.

1.66 These improvements to frequency and duration of the service increase the current cost of the contract to the council. The adverse financial impact of this can be mitigated to an extent by changing the charging tariff of Park and Ride. The proposed tariff changes are shown below:

Type of ticket	Current	Proposed	Change
Peak	£2.60	£2.50	-£0.10
Off peak	£1.60	£2.50	+£0.90
10 trip ticket	£10.30	£10.00	-£0.30
Concessions	Free	Free	None
Group travel for all occupants of a car (up to 5 people)	N/A	£3.00	N/A
12 week season ticket	£103	£103	None
Annual season ticket	£412	£412	None

1.67 The proposed pricing structure makes it slightly cheaper to travel at peak times and to travel frequently using a 10 trip ticket (equivalent of £2.00 per return journey) and very good value compared with parking in town for 4 hours or more under the proposed changes to car park charges, especially for anyone travelling with more than one person in the car. It does increase

the cost of off peak travel quite substantially, but anyone likely to travel on Park and Ride regularly within the space of 3 months can purchase a 10 trip ticket, or season tickets are available. It should also be noted that this review found that the £1.60 fare was one of the lowest in the country.

1.68 In order to ensure that people do shift from town centre car parking to Park and Ride, it is important that the change to the tariff structure is done in conjunction with changes to town centre parking charges.

1.69 Kent County Council currently permits use of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) passes on the Park and Ride service and this enables those with qualifying bus passes to travel for free. Whilst many Park and Ride services that charge on a pay to ride basis are part of the ENCTS scheme and accept concessionary fares, Park and Ride schemes are not always funded through this scheme. The service presents very good value in comparison with the return fare from on local bus services, even if off-peak fares are increased as recommended. However, officers at Kent County Council (KCC) have indicated that, whilst they remain happy to support the Park and Ride through acceptance of the ENCTS pass, KCC cannot afford to increase the funding from current levels. If off peak fares are increased to £2.50, the impact on KCC under the current scheme would be in the region of £68,000 if there was no change in passenger numbers and around £85,000 if number of those using concessionary fares increased by 10%. Further discussions at an officer level are planned to work through this issue and the implication to both councils.

1.70 The potential impact of changes to passenger numbers and income of the tariff changes are shown in the table below. The figures make the assumption that KCC funding will remain at the level received in 2016/17.

Change in users	No of users	No of cars	Income	Change from 16/17 income
+25%	310,846	206,393	£470,086	£128,658
+15%	285,979	189,881	£441,184	£99,755
+10%	273,545	181,626	£426,733	£85,304
No change	248,677	165,065	£397,830	£56,402
-10%	223,809	148,602	£368,928	£27,500
-15%	211,375	140,346	£354,477	£13,049
-25%	186,508	123,836	£325,575	-£15,853

1.71 A 10% increase equates to around 80 more users a day, which is estimated to be about 53 additional cars per day. Whilst it is impossible to accurately predict the impact on usage, information taken from the surveys, coupled

with impact of changes to car parking tariffs, suggests a 10% increase in usage is a reasonable assumption.

- 1.72 This modelling has been undertaken without including assumptions about use of the £3 group travel ticket. However, as only about 1 in 7 current users said that they would be more likely to car share if they paid to park, it is not expected that many current users would migrate to this type of ticket, but that instead it would attract a new market of additional users to the service. Obviously, a marketing campaign would be required for both Park and Ride and the revised car parking charges to maximise use of the service.
- 1.73 The increase in income from the revised structure would help to mitigate the increase in costs caused by increasing the frequency of buses and running the service later. This shown at Appendix 4.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Tri-study report

- 2.1 Option 1 - Agree the WSP tri-study report for publication.
- 2.2 Option 2 - Request specified modifications to the WSP tri-study report and agree its publication

Bus station

- 2.3 Option 1: Agree to the bus station improvements proposal, that being to work with key stakeholders to investigate funding opportunities and improvements to the bus station, as well as committing to joint funding of those improvements subject to a further report being brought back to this committee.
- 2.4 Option 2: Reject the bus station proposal and suggest alternatives measures to enhance the bus station facility.

Town centre car parking changes

- 2.5 Option 1: Adopt the proposed car parking tariffs shown at paragraph 1.57 – this is the recommended option as it will serve to re-balance car park demand, shift drivers to other forms of sustainable transport, including Park and Ride, and raise additional income that could be invested in sustainable travel.
- 2.6 Option 2: Keep the existing car parking tariffs – this is not recommended as the changes to a variable tariff will help meet the WSP recommendations of achieving occupancy of about 85% in all town centre car parks. The changes are also expected to generate additional income of about £200,000 which could be used to fund the £75,000 saving required from Park and Ride in 2019/10 and any additional funding required to improve the service by increasing frequency and duration.

Park and Ride

2.7 Appendix 4 is a comparison of the costs, estimated income and savings that would be delivered from each of the options for Park and Ride.

Option 1 – Accept the best tender return to run the Park and Ride service for 7 years with buses at 15 min intervals, increase the duration of the service and implement the revised pay to ride tariff shown at paragraph 1.66

2.8 This recommended option allows the council to continue to meet its policy stated in the Local Plan to provide a Park and Ride service. The service will be more frequent, run later, allow card payments and buses will be newer and more environmentally friendly. Combined with the changes to town centre car parking charges, the improvements to the service and the changed Park and Ride tariff will lead to increased use of Park and Ride, which is important to ensuring that the council delivers its Integrated Transport Strategy and Local Plan.

2.9 If the income from the ENCTS scheme does not increase, the service will require additional funding. Even using this worst case scenario, the service improvements and the £75,000 saving required in 2019/20 could be met by the increased income from adopting the proposed car parking tariffs.

Option 2 - Accept the best tender return to run the Park and Ride service for 7 years with buses at 20 min intervals, increase the duration of the service and implement the revised pay to ride tariff shown at paragraph 1.66

2.10 This option allows the council to continue to meet its policy stated in the Local Plan to provide Park and Ride whilst contributing towards the £75,000 saving. The buses would be newer and allow for cashless payments and the service could be run later until 7pm. However, as the service will not be running more frequently, it will still not really be fit for purpose. This means the service is likely to attract fewer new users, putting both the assumed level of income at risk and the delivery of the ITS and Local Plan at risk.

Option 3 - Extend the current contract for one year, increasing bus frequency and duration of the service and implement the revised pay to ride tariff shown at paragraph 1.66

2.11 This option allows the council to trial a more frequent and later running service without committing to running the service over a longer period. The probability is that this would be slightly more expensive for a year than proceeding with option 1 and that fewer users would shift to Park and Ride as the buses will be older and still will not allow card payments, which puts the assumptions around Park and Ride income at risk. The buses would not be as high an environmental specification as option 1 and option 2.

2.12 However, a year's trial does allow us to pilot the service improvements and new charging model to gather information on what we want from the service. The tender process indicated that there may be some innovative options that could be investigated, but to achieve best value further work

would be required, which includes taking into account consultation that has taken place and further market engagement and trials of possible options. This information would allow us to see whether we want to continue with the service for the longer term and on what basis. If the changes to Park and Ride and car park charges are successful and we better understand what our requirements for the service are, we could commence a further procurement exercise about 6 months into the extension of the contract.

2.13 Whilst this pilot to confirm service requirements was being carried out, officers could also further investigate other options for use of the current Park and Ride sites and other sustainable transport measures.

2.14 It should be noted that whilst the risk of the service being unreliable has reduced due to works that have been carried out on the current buses, the risk that service reliability will be impacted is greater than for option 1 or 2.

Option 4 - Extend the current contract for one year, increasing bus frequency and duration of the service and introduce a pay to park charging structure

2.15 As for option 3, this option allows us to understand what our requirements for a future Park and Ride service are, which may inform a future tender to ensure value for money. This option also allows us to trial whether a pay to park charging structure is desirable.

2.16 Whilst this pilot to confirm service requirements was being carried out, officers could also further investigate other options for use of the current Park and Ride sites and other sustainable transport measures.

2.17 The potential impact of changes to passenger numbers and income of the tariff changes are shown in the table below.

Change in cars	No of cars	Income	Change from 16/17 income
25%	206,331	£ 453,764	£ 112,336
15%	189,825	£ 417,382	£ 75,954
10%	181,572	£ 399,395	£ 57,967
No change	165,065	£ 363,011	£ 21,583
-10%	148,559	£ 326,627	-£ 14,801
-15%	140,305	£ 308,641	-£ 32,787
-25%	123,799	£ 272,259	-£ 69,169

2.18 The analysis at Appendix 4 assumes a charge of £2.50 per car and an increase in users of 10%.

2.19 A pay to park structure is more strategically aligned with town centre parking and allows potential users to make a much easier comparison between the costs of town centre car parking and Park and Ride. A charge

of £2.50 per car would make Park and Ride a better value option for those travelling into the town centre in groups than the proposed pay to ride tariff, which should attract more new users to the service.

- 2.20 However, under this option those using concessionary fares would no longer be able to use the service for free. This is a large risk as 1/3 of the current income for Park and Ride comes from the subsidy the council receives from KCC from concessionary fares. This also means this option would have a larger effect on concessionary fares users, especially older people who are the largest users of the service, as shown in the equality needs impact assessment at Appendix 5. Income made from ticket sales would also be subject to VAT under a pay to park scheme, meaning more users have to use the service to make the same level of income.
- 2.21 Whilst introduction of a pay to park tariff is the ideal in terms of strategic alignment with other town centre parking, it is more expensive to implement, even for a year, and more risky in terms of retaining current users and increasing income levels.

Option 5 - Discontinue Park and Ride, consider future options for the sites and invest the saving in alternative sustainable transport measures

- 2.22 Discontinuing the Park and Ride service would save about £196,200, which could be re-invested in other sustainable transport schemes. The whole net cost of delivering the service is not saved due to costs that would still exist without the service e.g. some management costs. It should be noted that if the sites are retained, the council would still have to pay the non-domestic rates, so savings would be in the region of £141,000. In addition, there is a possibility that some staff costs might be retained under another budget.
- 2.23 There is currently no indication of what other sustainable transport measures might be more effective than Park and Ride for a similar cost. The operational review did not identify anything that would be better, but this was not the main focus of the work. The council also has no other plans for the Park and Ride sites if the service is decommissioned.
- 2.24 Any decision on alternative uses for the sites and on using savings from discontinuing Park and Ride to invest in other sustainable transport initiatives will need to be considered with key stakeholders e.g. local bus companies, KCC etc.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Tri-study report

- 3.1 Agree the tri-study report for publication (option 1). This will ensure that the tri-study can be used as evidence to inform decision making on relevant matters.

Bus station

- 3.2 Agree to the bus station improvement proposal (option 1). This option presents the greatest opportunity to ensure a co-ordinated approach to

improvements and investment, maximising the potential benefits and quality of the offer and therefore ensuring greatest compliance with the approaches set out in the ITS and Local Plan.

3.3

Town centre car parking charges

3.4 Agree the proposed car parking tariffs shown at paragraph 1.57 (option 1). This will help re-balance car parking demand and raise additional income that could be invested in Park and Ride or other forms of sustainable transport.

Park and Ride

3.5 Agree to improve the frequency and duration of the service and fund this for 7 years, and implement the revised pay to ride tariff shown at paragraph 1.66 (Option 1). This will ensure the service is fit for purpose and support delivery of the ITS and 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. The risks that have been rated "RED" or "BLACK" are:

- a. The risk to potential income of KCC not increasing the subsidy for concessionary fares trips in line with the increase in off peak fares
- b. The risk to the council's finances of the subsidy to Park and Ride increasing due to the proposed service improvements – the level of this financial risk is between moderate and major.

4.2 However, we are satisfied that the following further responses to these risks are sufficient to bring their impact and likelihood within acceptable levels.

- a. Financial modelling has been undertaken on the assumption that the subsidy remains at the current level, so the council is fully prepared for this eventuality and plans accordingly
- b. This risk can be mitigated by the increase in income from changing town centre car parking charges

4.3 We will continue to monitor these risks as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 A summary of the most recent Park and Ride improvement survey is appended to this report (Appendix 2)

5.2 Results of the Park and Ride business survey are attached as Appendix 3.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If the preferred option is agreed, the Tri-study will be published on Maidstone’s website and will be used to inform future decision making. The best tender response will then be accepted and the new contract mobilised.
- 6.2 Notice will also be given to users of the Park and Ride service and regarding the changes to service and the pricing.
- 6.3 A report will be also be provided on future town centre parking arrangements and charges at the February meeting on this committee.

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 regeneration of the town centre as well providing a clean safe environment. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2	Rob Jarman/Georgia Hawkes
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Rob Jarman/Georgia Hawkes
Financial	<p>Park and Ride options 1, 3 and 4 will demand new spending in 2018/19. Option 2 may demand new spending in 2019/20 onwards following the £75,000 saving required from Park and Ride. This additional cost could be met by the increase in income from changes to the car parking tariffs.</p> <p>Park and Ride option 5, to discontinue the service, would save around £196,200 that could be invested in other sustainable transport initiatives. There may be costs</p>	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]

	as identified in appendix 4 and paragraph 2.22.	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman/Georgia Hawkes
Legal	There are no specific legal implications at present, however any contractual changes, or changes to leases / site ownerships, or any other concerns should be referred to the relevant legal officers at the time for advice.	Cheryl Parks, Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	Mid Kent Legal Services are content that following discussions with the report authors that any personal data collected for the purposes of the studies was done so in strict conformity with regulations relating to data protection.	Cheryl Parks – Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Equalities	We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore we have completed a separate equalities impact assessment (Appendix 5). It should be noted that those with concessionary fares passes will no longer be able to use the service for free under a pay to park model. This particularly affects older users with regards to Park and Ride.	Anna Collier - Policy & Information Manager
Crime and Disorder	N/A	Rob Jarman/Georgia Hawkes
Procurement	A compliant procurement exercise has been carried out. If a decision is made to extend the current contract to help us determine how we wish to	Rob Jarman/Georgia Hawkes and Mark Green Section 151 Officer

	<p>proceed with the service and explore options to better inform any future tender, as the current contract does not allow for an extension, we will seek a waiver from the Contract Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules to extend the contract with Arriva.</p>	
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Tri-study: Bus interchange study, town centre parking strategy and Park and Ride study
 - Appendix 2: Summary of the most recent Park and Ride improvement survey
 - Appendix 3: Highlights from the Park and Ride business survey
 - Appendix 4: Financial comparison of the 5 options for Park and Ride **(Exempt)**
 - Appendix 5: Equalities Impact Assessment
-



Maidstone Borough Council

MAIDSTONE TRI-STUDY

Bus Interchange Study, Town Centre Parking Strategy, and Park & Ride Study





Maidstone Borough Council

MAIDSTONE TRI-STUDY

Bus Interchange Study, Town Centre Parking Strategy, and
Park & Ride Study

PROJECT NO. 70031965

OUR REF. NO. MAIDSTONE TRI-STUDY

DATE: NOVEMBER 2017

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1

INTRODUCTION



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 APPOINTMENT

1.1.1. WSP has been appointed by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to undertake three linked studies (the Tri-Study). They are:

- Bus Interchange Study;
- Town Centre Parking Strategy; and
- Park & Ride Study.

1.2 STUDY CONTEXT

1.2.1. The objectives of each of part of the Tri-Study are derived from MBC's adopted Integrated Transport Strategy and adopted Local Plan. In particular, the Tri-Study addresses the following.

- Bus Interchange Study
 - PT8 (promote the provision of high quality bus services from Rural Service Centres including interchange facilities at rail stations),
 - PT11 (Improve bus facilities at Maidstone East and Maidstone West rail stations to maximise interchange capabilities),
 - PT12 (improve interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station) and PT13 (work towards an improved bus station in Maidstone town centre)
- Town Centre Parking Strategy
 - 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)
 - P3 (optimise the level of parking space provision in the town centre).
- Park & Ride Study
 - ITS Target 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),
 - ITS Target 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); and
 - ITS Target 5 (To undertake a full and independent review of Maidstone's Park and Ride provision, issue and act upon recommendations by 2017).

1.3 CONSULTATION

1.3.1. The following stakeholders have been consulted as part of this study:

- Maidstone Borough Council;
- Kent County Council (local highway authority); and
- Local Bus Operators (including Arriva, as the main provider of services in the town and across the Borough)

1.4 REPORT STRUCTURE

- 1.4.1. Following this introductory chapter, the report sets out relevant policy at the time of publications and then presents each element of the Tri-Study in turn.

2

POLICY CONTEXT



2 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1. In considering longer-term developments and investment in public transport infrastructure, it is important to take account of the policy context, which will shape the likely demand and supply of services over the lifetime of the asset(s). The following policy documents have therefore been reviewed as part of this study.

2.2 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 – DELIVERING GROWTH WITHOUT GRIDLOCK 2016-2031

2.2.1. In this document, KCC identifies the transport priorities and infrastructure requirements for the county to support housing and economic growth in the area for the period between 2016 and 2031. The overall aim of the LTP is to “deliver safe and effective transport, ensuring that all Kent’s communities and businesses benefit, the environment is enhanced and economic growth is supported” with defined outcomes as follows:

- Economic growth and minimised congestion;
- Affordable and accessible door-to-door journey;
- Safer travel;
- Enhanced environment; and
- Better health and wellbeing.

2.2.2. The Local Transport Plan recognises that Maidstone is a key centre in the County, not just because it is the County Town and that the road network negatively affects the Town Centre in terms of through traffic (being the meeting point of four A roads) but also because of the transfer effects of problems from the nearby M20 (which has 4 junctions serving the town).

2.2.3. The pattern of services on the rail network across the borough is also challenging as Maidstone East has relatively slow journey times to London Victoria but Headcorn, Staplehurst and Marden have direct services to the City. Bus services within the urban area are noted as being focussed largely around serving the town centre and hospital.

2.2.4. In terms of proposed schemes to address Maidstone’s transport priorities, public transport improvements would include:

- Thameslink extension to Maidstone East by 2018 giving direct services to the City of London;
- redevelopment of Maidstone East Station;
- refurbishment of Maidstone bus station;
- other bus infrastructure improvements within the town; and
- improvements on radial (bus) routes into town.

2.2.5. In addition, measures to deliver junction improvements and other corridor capacity improvements could also benefit public transport services in the town and Rural Service Centres.

2.2.6. Other issues identified as countywide and cross-district priorities are also relevant to the development of public transport in the borough including cashless ‘smart’ ticketing (“Connected Kent and Medway”) and enhancement to Medway Valley rail services to improve connectivity between Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone via Tonbridge.

2.3 MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

- 2.3.1. The Maidstone Local Plan is the key document that sets the framework to guide the future development of the borough and seeks to deliver 18,650 homes and supporting employment between 2011 and 2031.
- 2.3.2. The stated vision for the Town Centre considers that a key component of realising the vision is “Tackling congestion and air quality issues through improvements in provision for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, including public transport”. Although no specific reference is made to the Bus Station in Spatial Policy 4, Maidstone Town Centre, further details of policy are given in the Integrated Transport Strategy and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 2.3.3. Policy DM24, Sustainable Transport, does however state that “the council will work with the service operators to procure express/limited stop bus services on the radial routes into Maidstone (particularly from the north including the Newnham Park Area and from the south on the A229 and A274) to the Town Centre and railway stations in the morning and evening peaks to encourage modal shift together with the implementation of bus priority measures to seek to secure the reliability and speed of such services.”
- 2.3.4. Furthermore, “Through the ITS bus service frequencies will look to be increased (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre. (The A274 Sutton Road corridor from Park Wood already has an 8-minute frequency). Bus priority measures will be provided in order to encourage the use of public transport by seeking to ensure the reliability and frequency of services will continue to be made more accessible to all users.”
- 2.3.5. Of most significance to this study is the synopsis relating to the Bus Station: “The town’s main bus interchange located at the Mall Chequers Shopping Centre is not fit for purpose. In the short term (1-2years), the council will work with the landowners of the Mall Chequers Shopping Centre and service providers to secure significant improvements to the existing bus station to increase its attractiveness and ease of use. In the medium to longer term, the Mall Chequers Shopping Centre and adjoining land, where the current bus interchange facility is located, is identified for potential redevelopment (policy SP4). As part of the regeneration of the site and area, the council will work with the Centre’s owners (and other land owners that may be affected) together with the public transport operators to secure the provision of a new bus interchange facility that is more accessible, user-friendly and fit for purpose in the light of the desire for improved bus service provision and patronage across the borough.”

2.3.6. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (May 2016) makes reference to the following relevant Town Centre items in the scheduled highway and transportations improvements:

Table 1 – Infrastructure Delivery Plan Town Centre Highways & Transportation Improvements

Item Reference	Scheme	Estimated Cost	Status (February 2016)
HTTC2	Provision of a bus lane on Romney Place.	£60k	Detailed design work is complete. Funds have been secured. Construction anticipated in 2016.
HTTC3	Improvements to the Maidstone Bus Station	£2.0m	Outline design work currently underway
HTTC11	Improvements to Maidstone East Rail Station forecourt and ticket office, together with improvements to the public realm at the northern end of Week Street.	£2.0m	Funding secured and scheme expected to be delivered in 2016/17.
HTJ75	Increased frequency of 333 / 334 route to provide a bus service with 15 minute intervals between site RMX1 (1) [Newnham Park] and the town centre, potentially to include the provision of bus priority measures on New Cut Road to include traffic signals at the junction with the A20 Ashford Road.	c£2.7m	Bus extension scheme options considered under planning applications at site RMX1 (1) [Newnham Park].
HTSE8	Extension and/or improvements to the frequency of bus services along the A274 Sutton Road to connect the allocated sites with the Town Centre.	c£2.7m	Discussions ongoing with Arriva to determine the most appropriate scheme

2.3.7. In addition, several other improvements include bus priority and other enhancements to infrastructure and services outside of the Town Centre including HTSE1, HTNW7, HTUA3, HTC3, HTC5, HTM2, HTS2, HTS3, HTS4 and HTS5.

2.3.8. More generally, the principal employment site identified within the town is on Mote Road, immediately to the south of the existing bus station site (EMP1 (1)) and is allocated 8,000m² of employment floorspace. In terms of shopping, “the key opportunity and top priority for new retail development will be the Maidstone East/Royal Mail Sorting Office site (RMX1(2))”, which is allocated 10,000m² of retailing floorspace. The overall attractiveness of the retail and mixed-use offer will also be supported in the longer term by the identification of The Mall and the surrounding area including Sainsbury’s, as a Medium to Long Term Comprehensive Retail Development Opportunity (policy RMX1(3)).

2.3.9. The Strategic Development Locations are on the edge of the current urban area, to the north-west (policy SP2) and the south-east (policy SP3). While these will generate demand for travel, which could take the form of increased frequency of existing services or new services, which may then impact on the volume of buses using the town centre, the impact will be less direct than for the principal employment site (EMP1 (1)),

2.4 MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2011 – 2031

- 2.4.1. The Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) assesses the principal transport challenges and takes account of future jobs and housing growth. The ITS is consistent with National and Local planning policies including Kent Local Transport Plan 3 2011 – 2016, although as noted above, Local Transport Plan 4 has now been adopted by KCC.
- 2.4.2. The ITS notes that Maidstone has a well-established bus network, principally operated by Arriva, with a number of smaller independent operators.
- 2.4.3. The key transport issues for the Borough are also centred around Maidstone Town, these are summarised below; in particular the last point is emphatic about the condition of the current bus station:
- Maidstone has three town centre rail stations, but poor inter-urban connections (...).
 - The town's rail stations and bus station are not generally well connected to each other, making for a poor interchange experience.
 - Very few bus priority measures – such as bus lanes – exist within the borough, providing no advantage for bus journeys.
 - Lack of payment options. Most buses only accept cash payment (...).
 - Lack of live departure board information at most bus stops, and limited use of effective smartphone applications including ticket purchasing.
 - Service frequencies beyond the urban core are not convenient for most users.
 - The town's main bus interchange located at The Mall Chequers Shopping Centre is neither fit for purpose nor user-friendly. It is not well lit or ventilated and is threatening in character being essentially a tunnel under the Centre linking King Street and Romney Place.”
- 2.4.4. In the context of the transport challenges for Maidstone Borough and national and local transport policies, the following vision has been developed:
- “Realising Maidstone’s sustainable future; connecting communities and supporting a growing economy.”*
- 2.4.5. In order to fulfil this vision, the ITS has 5 objectives:
- Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices.
 - The enhancement of strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town.
 - Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
 - Reducing the air quality impacts of transport.
 - Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.
- 2.4.6. To achieve these objectives, the ITS aims to:
- Reduce demand for travel.
 - Change travel behaviour.
 - Promote modal shift.
 - Improve network efficiency.
- 2.4.7. Clearly, among other objectives and priorities, Objective 1 and Priority 3 are directly relevant to the development of public transport provision and encouraging uptake in the population.
- 2.4.8. The ITS acknowledges that the key to improving transport conditions in the Borough is the full involvement of all the stakeholders including the highway authority (KCC), bus operators, the rail company, Parish Councils and other community interest groups.

- 2.4.9. It is identified in the ITS that 80% of bus services in Kent are operated on a wholly commercial basis. Accordingly, MBC and KCC have signed a Quality Bus Partnership Agreement with Arriva, which commits to investment in local bus services.
- 2.4.10. The ITS advocates a series of action plans for all modes of transport in order to achieve the strategic objectives. The actions related to bus services include those to improve bus reliability, such as improving on-street parking enforcement, introducing bus priority measures on strategic routes, improvement to bus service frequencies on all radial/key routes into Maidstone and real-time information.

2.5 MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN (TRANSPORT TOPIC PAPER 2016)

The Maidstone Borough Local plan contains implementation plans for each mentioned initiative. For P&R services, the two actions below were planned prior to 2031:

- P&R Fare: £3.00 P&R parking cost
- New P&R service from Linton Corner with 15 minute frequency
-
- However, the service from Linton Corner has now been cancelled, while the fare increase is still being investigated.

The Local plan also indicates broad locations for housing growth through the Policy reference Area:

- H2(1) Maidstone town centre 940
- H2(2) Invicta Park barracks 500
- H2(3) Lenham 1,000

2.6 MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE STUDY

- 2.6.1. The purpose of the Town Centre Study was to provide a robust evidence base to support the preparation of the Core Strategy and an Area Action Plan for Maidstone town centre. Although the Study provides a wider vision for Maidstone town centre, Section 4 of the Study is dedicated to transport.
- 2.6.2. The Study notes that the main distributor roads are:
- to the east Sittingbourne Road (A249), Wat Tyler Way, Knightrider Street, Lower Stone Street, Mill Street and Bishops Way;
 - to the west, Tonbridge Road (A26) and London Road (A20)
 - to the south, Upper Stone Street (A229) and Hayle Road (A229);
 - to the north, Fairmeadow (A229) and Engineers' Road (A229).
- 2.6.3. Focussing on Maidstone Bus Station, the Study notes that the station is in a prominent location within the public realm but with two main issues:
- Pedestrians access to the bus station is via The Mall. However, the legibility of the bus station is currently poor and uninviting for potential public transport users.
 - Bus circulation and general traffic movement through the town centre is predominantly via King Street / High Street / Mill Street / Palace Avenue / Lower Stone Street and Romney Place. This results in congestion and decreased air quality along these routes throughout the town centre.

- 2.6.4. The Study also notes “There may be potential to move the location of the existing bus station, taking into account bus service routing and traffic circulation, and aiming to improve sustainability. This is a particularly important issue given the plans for increased park and ride and public bus services in the longer term” and also concludes that: “Bus access is helpfully focused on King Street and High Street, but the tenuous routes which buses are forced to take along with an unattractive bus station mean the use of buses is not as appealing as it could be”.
- 2.6.5. The Study recommends enhancing existing bus operations and creating public transport interchanges near railway stations and in the short term to continue using the current Bus Station as the main interchange by increasing the level of quality and services. Other options highlighted include:
- Retain High Street and King Street as a principal transport hub, but promote buses on Palace Avenue;
 - New satellite Bus Station at Maidstone East Railway Station; and
 - Improve Maidstone Bus Station on The Mall and Sainsbury’s site when re-development of this area is viable.
- 2.6.6. The study provides background information on P&R services, including location, mode of operation and travel patterns and other relevant factors. The following elements are noted:
- Recent ticket sales on P&R services (2009) indicate that around 40% of the passengers travel during the peak period and 60% in the off peak;
 - Overall, there are over 5,600 parking spaces available for public use within Maidstone, 40% of which are believed to be vacant on a regular basis;
 - Fairmeadow [A229] is the principal vehicle corridor for traffic access to Maidstone town centre. This route primarily provides an important link for vehicular and service access to the town centre retail core, while also acting as a through road to the southern areas of Maidstone;
 - Maidstone P&R has proved to be successful in traffic management, environmental and strategic terms. The P&R sites have significantly reduced the number of cars parking within the town centre at peak times. However, a subsidy is required to operate the P&R, reducing Council revenue;
 - The recent introduction of the Fremlin Walk car park has also encouraged car-borne shoppers back into the town centre. Nevertheless, there is still a considerable amount of parking in Maidstone which is underutilised;
 - There is the potential to improve parking, possibly through rationalising the existing unused parking spaces while implementing additional management measures. However, any rationalisation of car parking must consider the revenue implications, sustainability goals, increased rail passenger demand, and the accessibility and desirability of each location.

2.7 INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN (MAY 2016)

- 2.7.1. The infrastructure delivery plan suggests that the two P&R schemes proposed to be implemented on the edge of Maidstone between 2016 and 2020 (specifically at M20 J7 and at Linton Crossroads, Coxheath) in the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) have now been deleted from the plan due to deliverability issues. Part of the secured budget is now provisionally reallocated towards the improvements to the junction of Willington Street and Wallis Avenue with the A274 Sutton Road.

2.8 MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED PARKING STRATEGY RESEARCH – APPRAISAL REPORT (2012)

- 2.8.1. Following on from their 2011 study, JMP undertook an Option Appraisal Report which presented the appraisal of potential scheme options to be included within the Integrated Transport Strategy.
- 2.8.2. As part of the study a Business Workshop was undertaken to understand the views of businesses in relation to current transport provision in the borough, one area of focus was specifically upon the issue of town centre car parking and tariffs. The outputs of the workshop indicated:
- Transport accessibility, and more specifically, vehicle accessibility, were considered much more important issues for business operations than parking charges.
 - The impact of long-stay car parking charges will have limited impact upon retail shoppers and so will have limited effect on the attractiveness of the town as a retail destination.
 - The long-stay charges will impact most upon commuters. It is, therefore, imperative to provide an integrated package of measures that provides an alternative means of access for commuters in to the town.
 - Park & ride is considered an ideal alternative since it still allows individuals to drive to a park & ride, hence giving flexibility.
 - Improvements to bus service provision will provide an alternative to commuters living within the urban fringe to travel into the town.
- 2.8.3. JMP also collected information from businesses via a questionnaire which indicated, similarly to the stakeholder engagement, that there is clearly an oversupply of parking in the town centre. The report concluded:
- The reduction of long stay car parking is considered to be an appropriate measure, but, again, only as long as it is supported by improved public transport provision.
 - In terms of an overall package of measures, the restriction of town centre car parking and increased long-stay parking charges is considered to be imperative to developing a successful park & ride service.
 - Experience from elsewhere around the UK has demonstrated that successful park & ride goes hand-in-hand with tight controls on town centre parking and parking tariffs.

3

BUS INTERCHANGE STUDY



3 BUS INTERCHANGE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1. This study follows an initial assessment, conducted by MBC, to identify future improvements to bus interchanges in the Borough and which was reported to the Strategic Planning and Sustainability and Transport Committee as the “Maidstone Bus Station Options Appraisal” on 7th February 2017.
- 3.1.2. Including the existing Bus Station, twelve sites were identified by MBC and based on an initial high level appraisal, it was recommended that the following sites be taken forward for further consideration to improve bus facilities:
- Maidstone Bus Station (The Mall)
 - Maidstone East Station (short term)
 - Maidstone East Station / Royal Mail Redevelopment
 - King Street On Street
 - The Broadway Centre
 - Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site

CONTEXT

- 3.1.3. The current Bus Station is owned by Capital and Regional, a specialist real estate investment trust (REIT), as it is part of The Mall shopping centre (originally built in 1976 and known as the Chequers Centre).
- 3.1.4. The main focus of this study is to assess the current bus station and consider potential alternative and/or additional bus transport interchanges in the Town Centre, as well as examining the level of bus interchange provided at the railway stations across the rest of the Borough.
- 3.1.5. In essence the study will consider 4 distinct options, from the perspective of optimising bus infrastructure:
- Optimising the existing Bus Station (The Chequers);
 - Alternative off-street single facility;
 - Alternative on-street options (e.g. removing the existing bus station and providing for all bus services on High Street / King Street); and
 - Alternative multiple sites, creating smaller-scale ‘bus hubs’, e.g. at Maidstone East Railway Station.
- 3.1.6. Maidstone, in addition to being the only town in the Borough, is also the County Town of Kent. According to the 2011 Census, there were 107,627 residents in the Maidstone Built Up Area (BUA) and 155,143 residents in the Maidstone Borough as a whole.

3.1.7. The Census data has been interrogated further to understand local modes of travel (i.e. reliance on private vehicles compared to public transport) on journeys to work.

Table 2 - QS703EW Method Of Travel To Work (2011 Census Data)

Method of Travel to Work	Maidstone BUA		Maidstone Borough	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Work mainly at or from home	5,260	10%	9,110	12%
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	65	0%	113	0%
Train	2,864	5%	5,073	6%
Bus, minibus or coach	2,468	5%	2,881	4%
Taxi	162	0%	193	0%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	368	1%	533	1%
Driving a car or van	32,245	60%	47,188	60%
Passenger in a car or van	2,810	5%	3,719	5%
Bicycle	762	1%	914	1%
On foot	6,914	13%	8,093	10%
Other method of travel to work	189	0%	273	0%
Total	54,107	100%	78,090	100%

3.1.8. Given the proportion of the Borough’s population which lives in the Maidstone BUA (just over two-thirds), it is logical that the mode shares are very similar for the BUA as for the Borough as a whole. The main variations are more working from home and commuting by rail across the Borough as a whole than in the BUA and more walking and bus use in the BUA than across the Borough as a whole.

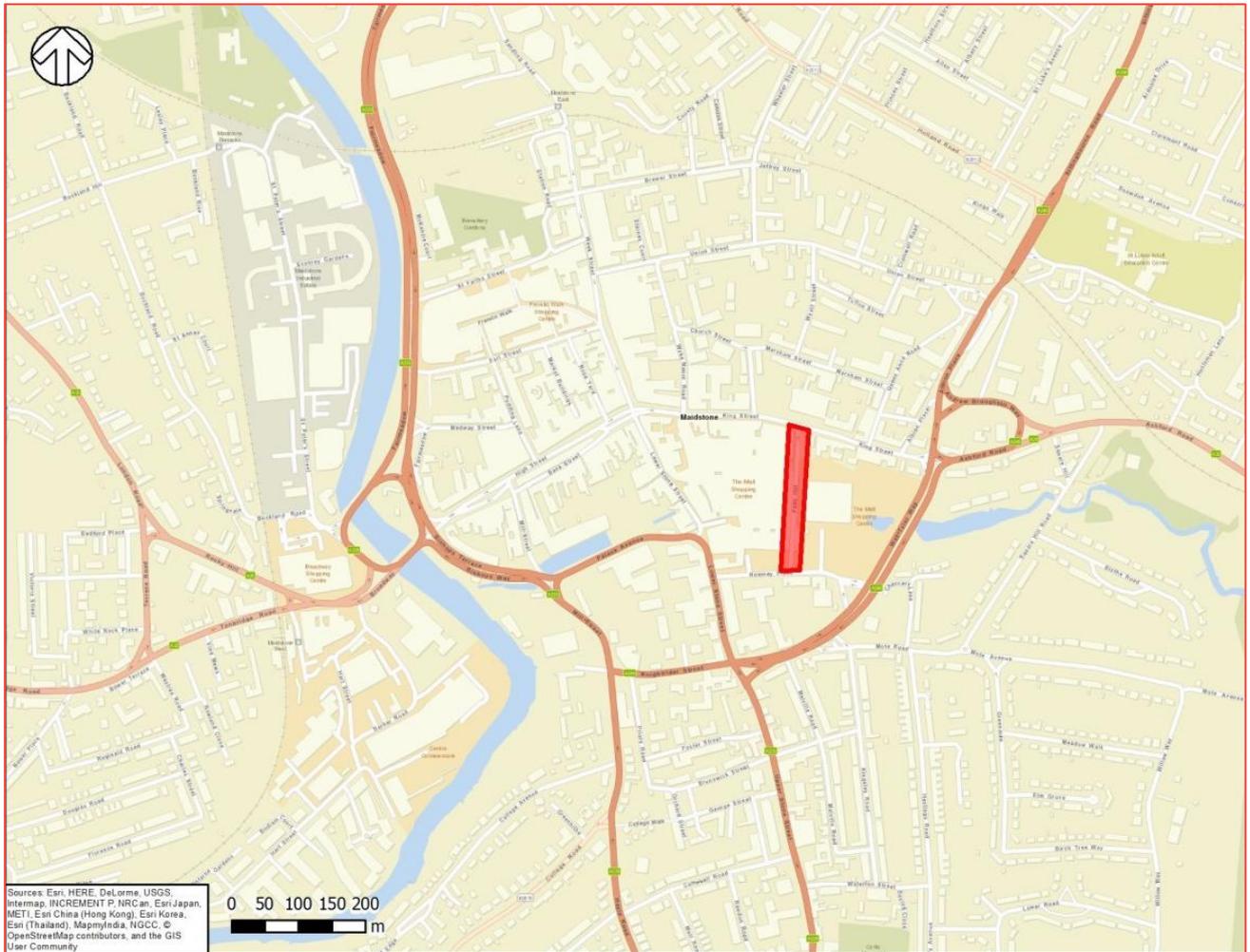
3.1.9. As reviewed in the following chapter, current planning documents anticipate that the Borough will experience significant residential and employment growth, and therefore the effects of further congestion in the future could affect travel to work mode choice.

3.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

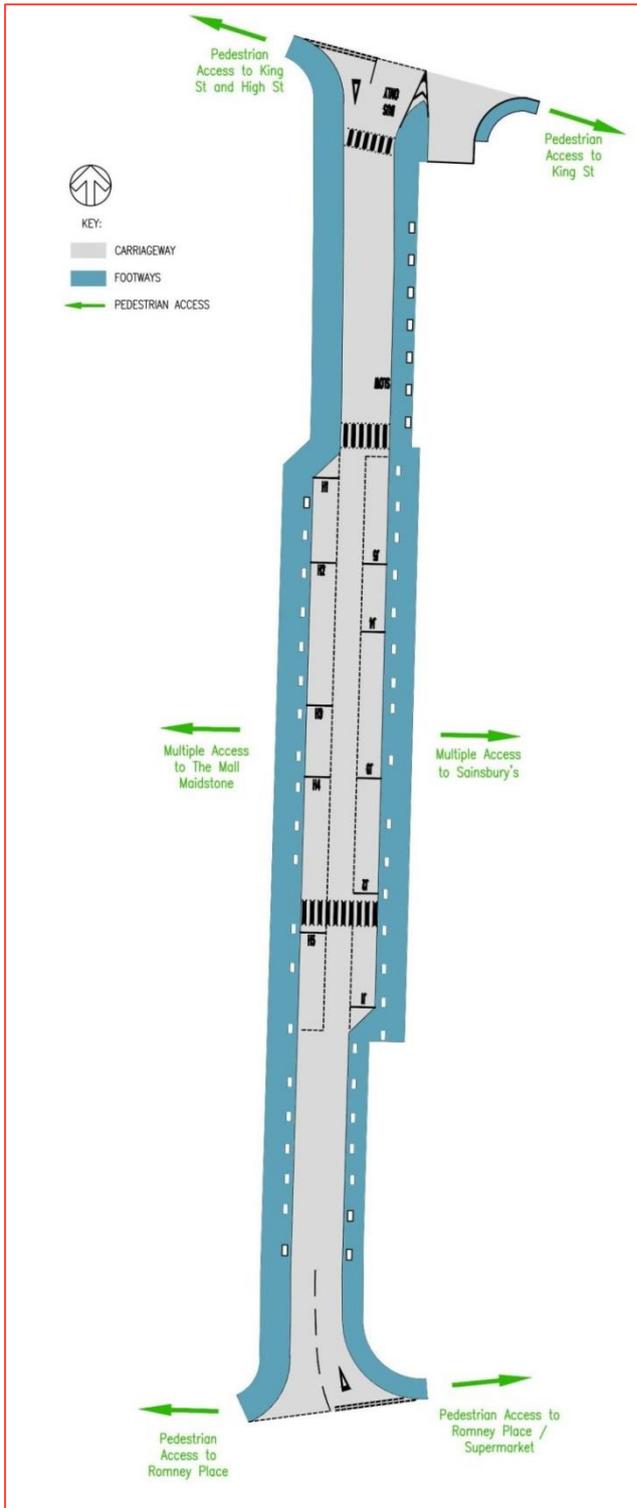
3.2.1. The existing Bus Station (also still known locally as ‘The Chequers’) is located within The Mall Maidstone shopping centre. The Bus Station creates a link between King Street (to the north) and Romney Place (to the south), and is provided on the alignment of Pad’s Hill. Figure 1 shows the location of the Bus Station within the Town Centre.

Figure 1 – Bus Station Location Plan



- 3.2.2. The Bus Station currently operates as two parallel rows of contiguous bus stops, with a single relatively narrow running lane (for buses in both directions) in between. Bus stop numbers H1 to H5 are in the southbound direction whilst numbers J1 to J6 are in the northbound direction, giving a total of 11 bus stops, although H5 and J6 are both noted on bus station information to be set-down stops only. Other signage indicates a total of 15 stops (J1 to J8 and H1 to H7), however this is understood to be outdated and does not match the information displays or road markings within the bus station.
- 3.2.3. Buses access the Bus Station via slopes at either end and there are currently no formal spaces dedicated to bus layover. Buses do layover at both entrances in order to alleviate congestion and crowding at the bus stops, although this in turn can cause an obstruction to moving buses.
- 3.2.4. Although the Bus Station is owned by Capital and Regional (The Mall), use of the Bus Station is in principle open to any operator of a local or long distance bus service. In practice it is used mainly by Arriva, who have an operational control office at the Romney Place end of the building, with Nu-Venture being the other scheduled user on a daily basis. The current layout of the Bus Station is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Current Bus Station Layout



3.2.5. The characteristics of the Bus Station can be summarised as follow:

- Integral part of shopping centre building, with access to both floors (and adjacent to Sainsbury's supermarket);
- Covered waiting facilities with sliding doors at each bus stop;

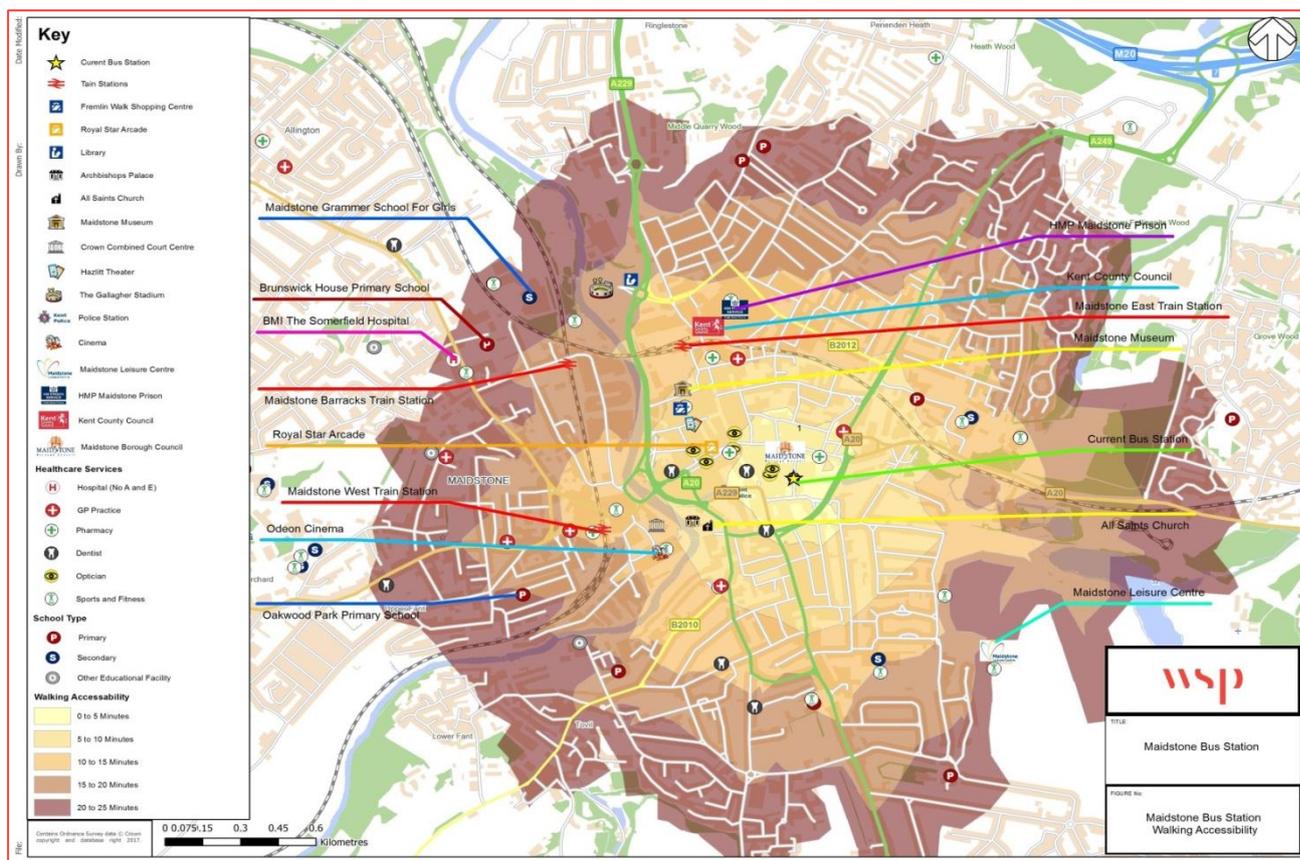
- Seating facilities are provided on both sides of the station;
- Natural and installed lighting (although the latter is somewhat ineffective even on bright days);
- Snack kiosk located on The Mall side of the waiting area;
- Public toilets are within the shopping centre;
- Buses (and servicing access) only;
- Buses can access and from both ends (with no restricted turns); and
- 11 marked parallel bays, 2 of which are set-down only (drive in drive out – ‘DIDO’).

3.2.6. Notwithstanding the facilities mentioned above, the general appearance of the Bus Station is that it lacks clean, attractive and high-quality waiting facilities, the lighting over the area used by buses is poor (being orange and insufficient) and the overall experience is not one which would encourage use by existing or potential bus passengers. For example, there are no real time information displays and overall the static information on display is not presented consistently or maintained.

BUS STATION SITE ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.2.7. Relative to the Town Centre rail stations, the Bus Station is located approximately 800m walking distance from Maidstone East Station, 1.3km walking distance from Maidstone Barracks Station and 1.0km walking distance to Maidstone West.
- 3.2.8. Furthermore, the Bus Station is located in close proximity to the High Street and the main pedestrianised shopping areas of Week Street and Gabriel’s Hill. Figure 3 shows the location of the Bus Station within the Town Centre and in relation to existing local facilities. The map further shows walking isochrones, centred from the Bus Station, in bands of 5 minutes, up to 25 minutes.
- 3.2.9. Figure 3 demonstrates that the Bus Station is located in a very central position with the Town Centre, at reasonable walking distance to many key facilities and amenities, such as the main shopping areas and other public amenities, such as the borough and county council offices.
- 3.2.10. In addition to being destinations for customers and visitors, it should also be noted that Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council are understood to be the two largest employers in the town centre and their staff car parking policies already contribute to the usage and mode share of public transport, including the Park and Ride.

Figure 3 – Maidstone Bus Station Location - Walking Isochrones



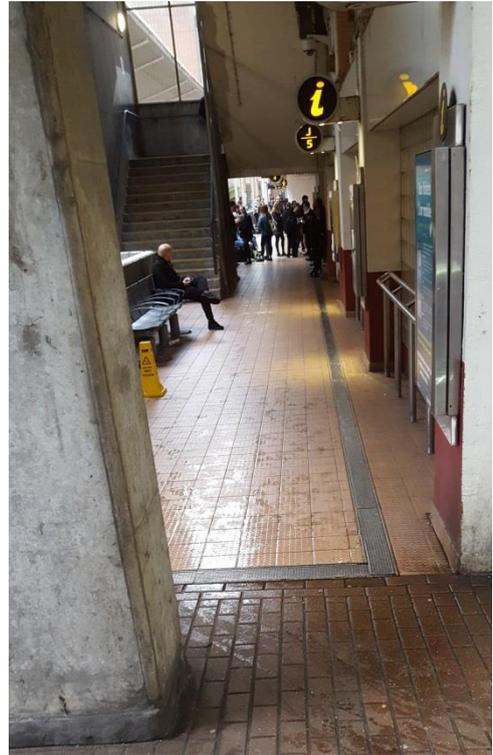
BUS STATION CONDITION AND OPERATION

- 3.2.11. The immediate first impression for any visitor to the Bus Station is that it is showing clear signs of aging and consequently does not provide a welcoming or positive image of bus travel in Kent. Site visits were made to the Bus Station during the AM and PM peak period during school term time in order to observe the maximum number of passenger and vehicle movements.
- 3.2.12. The site visits confirmed a number of points raised in related documents and discussions with key stakeholders. Figure 4 shows the current bus stops and typical waiting facilities within the pedestrian areas, along with the entrance from Romney Place.

Figure 4 – Existing Maidstone Bus Station (The Chequers)



Bus Stops and marked pedestrian crossing



Waiting Facilities on east side of bus station



Access from Romney Place – demonstrating lack of formal layover spaces

Customer Perspective

- 3.2.13. The general appearance of the bus station is dark and dirty. While litter-picking patrols are carried out by cleaners employed by The Mall, cleaning above floor level is generally poor with not all issues being as a result of the proximity of diesel-powered vehicles (e.g. cobwebs and bird excrement).

- 3.2.14. Cleaning of the otherwise unused space between the east side of the bus station and Sainsbury's appears to be particularly infrequent, which may be due to the difficulty of access, although the appearance is not helped by the predominant use of concrete surrounding the open water.

Figure 5 – Space between bus station and Sainsbury's



- 3.2.15. Even at peak times, there is generally enough waiting space (although not necessarily seating) for intending passengers at each stop.
- 3.2.16. Despite the sufficiency of waiting space, passengers were observed waiting on the bus side of the automatic doors (on the metal barriers) when space was available on the waiting area side of the automatic doors.
- 3.2.17. Information provision is limited to static printed displays with the semi-permanent and permanent information provided by The Mall noted for being particularly out of date and inconsistent.
- 3.2.18. Pedestrian crossing points are marked but due to the general constraints of the bus station, these require passengers to step round or between stationary buses into the path of moving vehicles, without clear sight either from or of the pedestrians.
- 3.2.19. Although at a relatively low volume, pedestrian movements took place within the bus station which were away from the designated crossing points, not all of which were made by schoolchildren. The existing signage could also be stronger on the point of pedestrian safety.
- 3.2.20. Despite the negative aspects of the bus station, it is issued by a steady flow of passengers and substantial numbers at peak times.

Operational Perspective

- 3.2.21. There are no designated layover bays within the formal marked area of the bus station, requiring buses to layover on the approach to either entrance, causing additional obstructions to a clear view of the stops and any stray pedestrian movements.
- 3.2.22. All services are currently operated by buses which are at least 10 metres long and, apart from stop H3 which is not currently scheduled to be used by any services, there is effectively no space between consecutive stops. This layout makes it almost impossible for buses using the stop in front of an occupied stop to pull in within the marked bay.
- 3.2.23. The combination of the relatively narrow two-direction central running lane and the difficulty of buses pulling entirely parallel to the correct stop causes short-term delays to buses in both directions.
- 3.2.24. Some stops experience buses double-parking in order to load passengers, particularly when services are delayed.
- 3.2.25. Some passengers are dropped off at the entrance to the bus station, dependent upon whether the bus is due to layover and if the correct stop is clear.
- 3.2.26. During heavy rain, the condition of the road surface in places causes puddles and there is a small amount of leakage from the roof.
- 3.2.27. In addition to buses (and Arriva's Engineering Support vehicle), a cash delivery van was observed in the bus station (in the morning peak), facing the wrong way for the west side of the bus station.

EXISTING BUS SERVICES

- 3.2.28. Although the bus station can be accessed from two-way roads to both the north and the south, it is not currently used by all operators and services which run in the Town Centre. For example, the Park and Ride services (operated by Arriva under contract to MBC) pass along King Street, as does the inter-urban service to/from Ashford (operated by Stagecoach) and the National Express service between London and Dover. The Arriva 'Sapphire' service to the Medway Towns (the most frequent inter-urban service) has also been relocated away from the bus station in recent times.
- 3.2.29. The reasons for services not using the bus station include it not being on the most direct route through the town centre (and the difficulty of navigating through traffic on roads necessary to reach the Bus Station) and the operational constraints of using stops in the Bus Station (e.g. lack of layover space), compounded by the general unattractive nature of the bus station itself.
- 3.2.30. In addition to Arriva, the only other operator scheduled to use the bus station on a daily basis is Nu-Venture, although this is largely related to the supported service contracts held with KCC. Autocar use the bus station for a single journey on a Tuesday, again related to a KCC contracted service.
- 3.2.31. Table 3 lists the current services which use stops within the Bus Station, along with the name of the operator. As mentioned above, scheduled timetable information indicates that only bus stops H1, H2 and H4 are in use northbound. For southbound stops, the scheduled timetable information indicates that J1, J3, J4 and J5 are in use, although within the bus station timetables are on display for current services at stop J2. Stops H5 and J6 are noted as being set-down only stops.

3.2.32. Although buses which find their stop occupied by another bus could in theory use an alternative stop in the same direction, observations indicate that buses will either wait for the stop to become clear or double-bank in order for passengers to see that their bus has departed from the correct stop.

Table 3 - Bus Services at each bus stop

Stop	Service	Routes	Service Operator
H1	1	Barming - Fant - Maidstone	Nu-Venture
	3	Maidstone - Maidstone Hospital	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	6	East Peckham - Paddock Wood - Pembury - Tunbridge Wells	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	6x	Maidstone - Maidstone Hospital - Tunbridge Wells Hospital	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	7	Maidstone - Mereworth - Hadlow - Tonbridge - Tunbridge Wells	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	23	Yalding - Laddingford - East Farleigh - Tovil - Maidstone	Nu-Venture
	26	Yalding - Hunton - Tovil - Maidstone	Nu-Venture
	28	Marden - Maidstone	Nu-Venture
	60	Maidstone - Allington - Palace Wood - Maidstone Hospital	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	78	Maidstone - Barming - Maidstone	Nu-Venture
	266	Maidstone - Watlingbury - Lamberhurst - Kildown	Autocar Bus & Coach
	505	Maidstone Town Centre - Lockmeadow Market	Arriva Kent & Surrey
H2	24	Sandhurst - Headcorn - Maidstone	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	58	Maidstone - East Malling - West Malling - Ryarsh - Addington - Wrotham Heath	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	71	Maidstone - Allington - Larkfield - Lunsford Park - Snodland	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	72	Maidstone - Allington - Larkfield - East Malling - West Malling - Kings Hill	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	570	Maidstone - Allington - Larkfield - West Malling - Offham - Wrotham	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	572	Maidstone - Allington - Larkfield - Kings Hill	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	576	Maidstone - Allington - Larkfield - West Malling - Kings Hill	Arriva Kent & Surrey
H4	9	Maidstone - Vinters Park - Grove Green - Madginford - Bearsted	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	101	Maidstone - Chatham - Gillingham (- Twydall)	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	155	Maidstone - Aylesford - Borstal - Rochester - Chatham	Nu-Venture
	155	Maidstone - Aylesford - Borstal - Rochester - Chatham	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	333	Maidstone - Detling Hill - Sittingbourne - Faversham - Oare	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	334	Maidstone - Detling Hill - Sittingbourne - Iwade - Sheerness	Arriva Kent & Surrey
J1	58	Addington - Wrotham Heath - Ryarsh - West Malling - East Malling - Maidstone	Nu-Venture
	85	Maidstone - Senacre Wood	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	572	Kings Hill - West Malling - Larkfield - Allington - Maidstone Boys Grammar	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	575	Kings Hill/West Malling/Snodland - Larkfield - Maidstone	Arriva Kent & Surrey
J3	12	Maidstone - Headcorn - Tenterden	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	13	Maidstone - Otham - Leeds - Hollingbourne	Nu-Venture
	13	Maidstone - Otham - Leeds - Hollingbourne	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	24	Maidstone - Headcorn - Sandhurst	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	82	Maidstone - Park Wood	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	333	Oare - Faversham - Sittingbourne - Detling Hill - Maidstone	Arriva Kent & Surrey
J4	5	Maidstone - Staplehurst - Cranbrook - Hawkhurst - Sandhurst	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	59	Maidstone - Boughton Monchelsea - Grafty Green	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	65	Maidstone - Cornwallis Academy - Sutton Valence	Nu-Venture

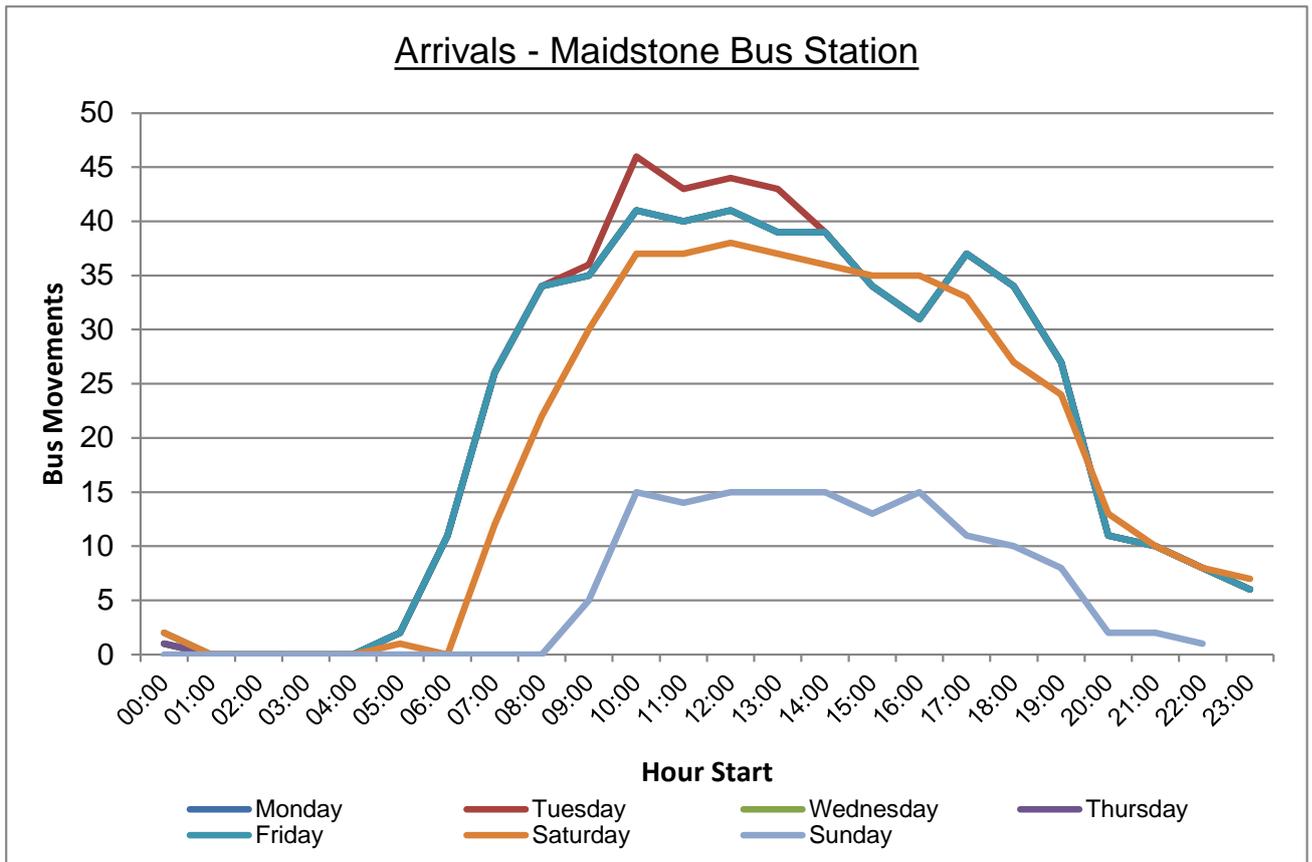
Stop	Service	Routes	Service Operator
	89	Maidstone - Loose - Coxheath	Arriva Kent & Surrey
J5	4	Maidstone - Shepway - Downswood	Arriva Kent & Surrey
	22	Maidstone - Tovil - East Farleigh - Gallants Lane - Hunton - Chainhurst	Nu-Venture
	23	Maidstone - Tovil - East Farleigh - Yalding - Laddingford	Nu-Venture
	25	Maidstone - Tovil - Gallants Lane - Hunton - Yalding - Laddingford - Marden - Goudhurst	Nu-Venture
	26	Maidstone - Tovil - Hunton - Yalding - Laddingford	Nu-Venture
	27	Maidstone - Marden - Goudhurst	Nu-Venture
	28	Maidstone - Marden	Nu-Venture

BUS TIMETABLE ANALYSIS

Scheduled Bus Movements

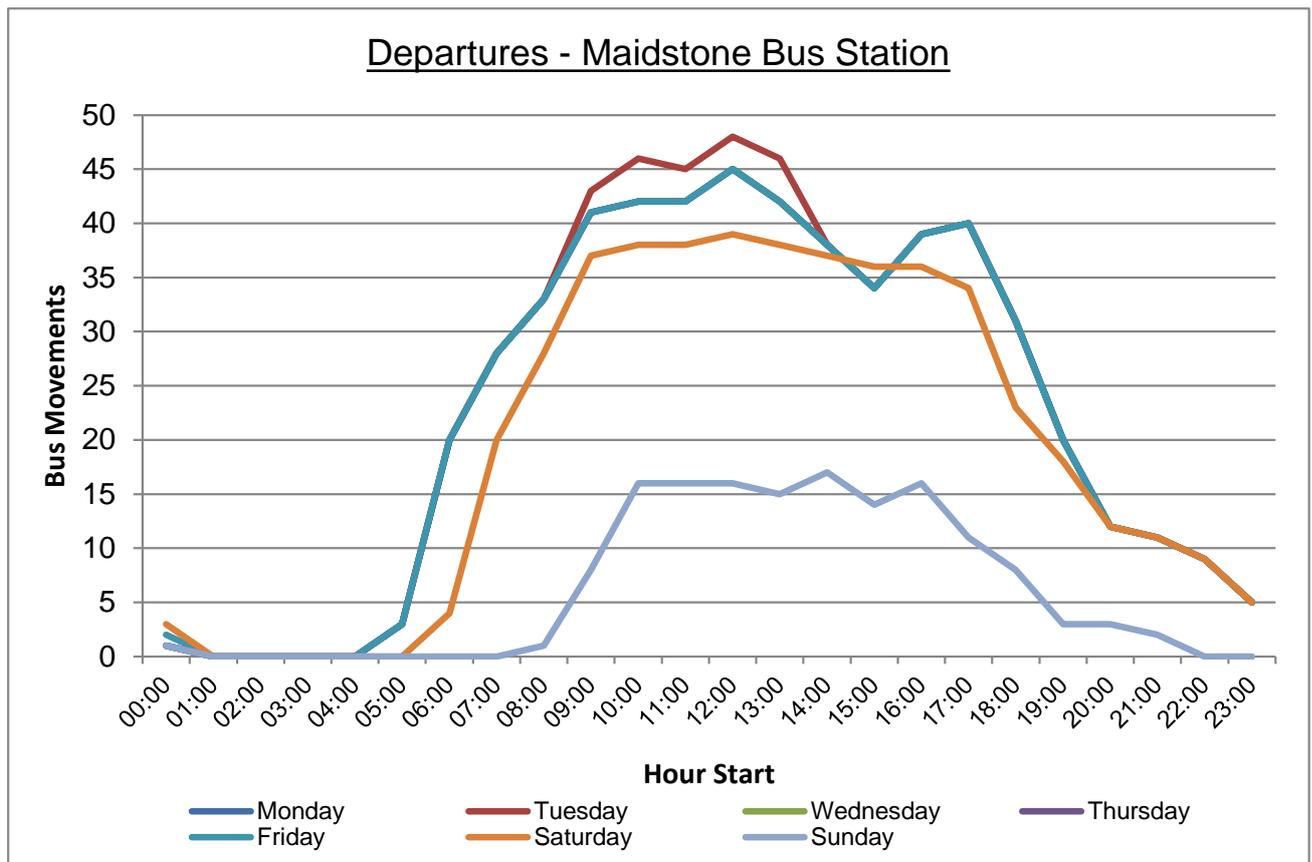
- 3.2.33. The following section outlines the general operation of the bus station based on analysis of bus service timetables (April 2017). Timetables will of course change over time and the overall task of the study is not to reschedule existing services but to understand in broad terms the general pattern of bus services now and in the future and which would need to be accommodated by any revised bus interchange facilities. Figure 1 and Figure 7 show service arrivals and departures broken-down by the day of the week.
- 3.2.34. During the week, Maidstone Market takes place every Tuesday and it is this which is understood to give rise to it having the highest number of arrivals and departures on weekdays, with the difference from other weekdays being between 08:00 and 15:00.
- 3.2.35. This analysis is based on the scheduled timetable information, therefore within the data any layover or other out of service movements, such as to or from a depot or layover area (such as the coach park in Sittingbourne Road Car Park), do not have a public arrival/departure movement and are therefore not included in the analysis.
- 3.2.36. The data does also not include any infrequent or ad-hoc movements e.g. if any tour coach uses the bus station.

Figure 6 – Existing Maidstone Bus Station Arrivals by Day of Week



Source: TRACC software – traveline Data (April 2017)

Figure 7 – Existing Maidstone Bus Station Departures by Day of Week



Source: TRACC software – Traveline Data (April 2017)

- 3.2.37. Note: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays have an identical departure and arrival pattern and are therefore represented in Figure 6 and Figure 7 as a single line, as Monday.
- 3.2.38. The timetabled data shows that the bus station has 507 arrivals per day Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, with 523 arrivals on Tuesdays. There are 444 arrivals on Saturdays and 141 arrivals on Sundays.
- 3.2.39. Similarly, the scheduled timetable data shows that there are 536 departures on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and 552 departures on Tuesdays. On Saturdays, there are 466 departures and 147 departures on Sundays.
- 3.2.40. It is noteworthy that for both arrivals and departures, and even on days other than Tuesday, the highest number of bus movements actually occurs between the traditional AM and PM peak periods indicating that at least in terms of buses (if not passengers) the busiest time is after the AM peak until the early afternoon.

Busiest Bus Station Movements – Tuesdays

3.2.41. Table 4 provides a further analysis of bus movements on Tuesdays, which represents the current “worst case scenario” in terms of demand for space (when additional services are provided to serve market day).

Table 4 - Maidstone Bus Station – Tuesday 2-way Bus Movements

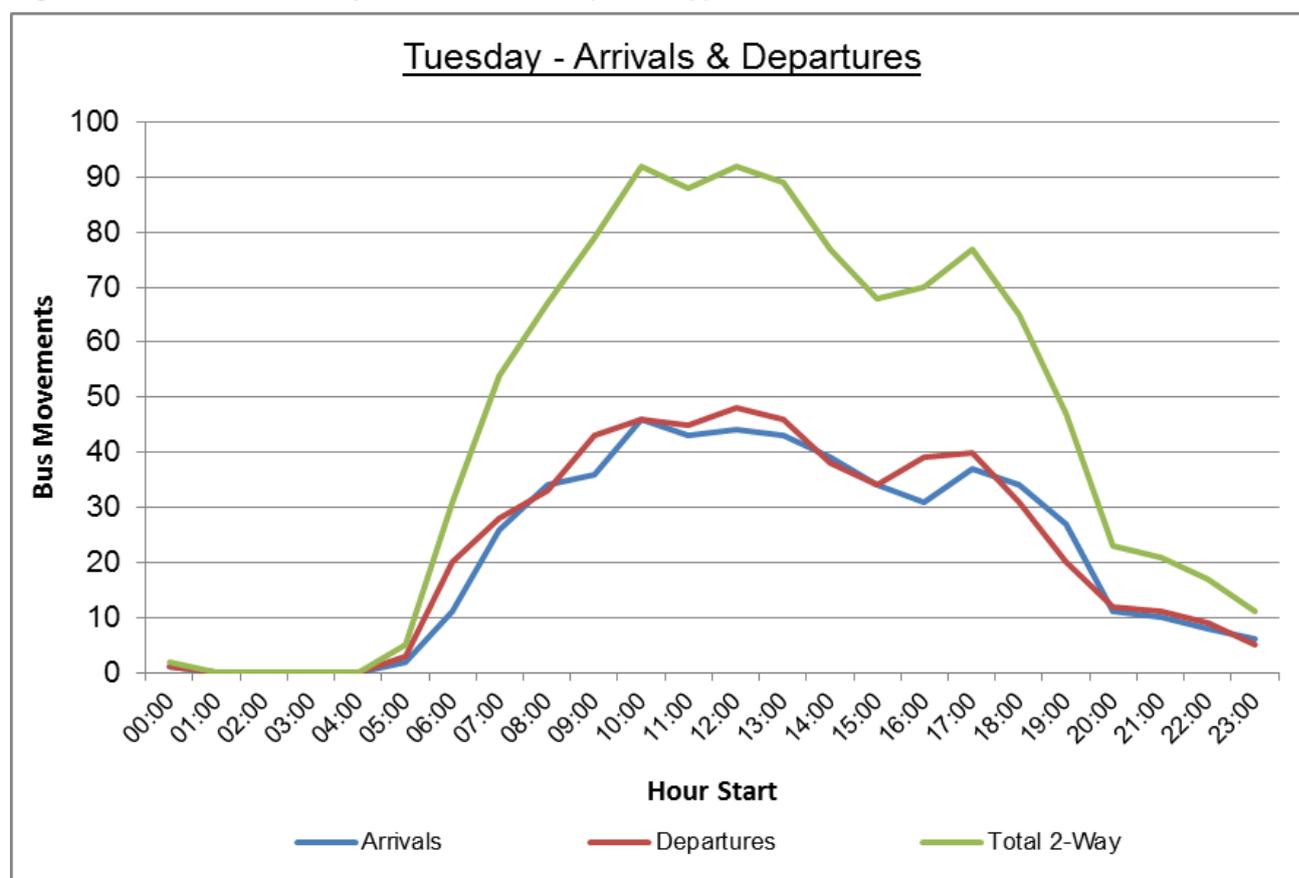
Time Period	Arrivals	Departures	Total
AM Peak Hour 0800-0900	34	33	67
Absolute Peak Hour 1200-1300	44	48	92
PM Peak Hour 1700-1800	37	40	77
Daytime Total 0700-1900	447	471	918
Daily 24 hours	523	552	1075

Source: TRACC software – Traveline Data (April 2017)

3.2.42. The timetable data indicates that the bus station’s single busiest hour is between 12:00 and 13:00, with 92 2-way bus movements on a Tuesday, and that during the ‘normal’ weekday peak hours there are 67 2-way movements between 08:00 and 09:00 and 77 2-way movements between 17:00 and 18:00.

3.2.43. Figure 8 also shows traffic movements at the bus station on a Tuesday according to the scheduled timetable data.

Figure 8 – Timetabled 2-way bus movements (Tuesday)



- 3.2.44. If the 471 daytime departures were spread equally across hours of the day and stops, it would equate to an average of 3.6 buses per stop per hour. Of course, this is only a theoretical figure as it does not take account of any varying frequencies during that time, the routing of services or other factors such as the commonality of destination between multiple services. Nevertheless, it gives an indication of the typical usage made of the current bus station by the existing network.
- 3.2.45. In order to put the current use of Maidstone Bus Station in context, the best practice document “Good Practice Guide for Bus Station Design”, Martin Robertson Bursary (2007) provides guidance on the theoretical capacity of each bus bay.

Table 5 - Guideline Bus Bay Capacities

Bus Bay Capacity by Type	Bus per Hour Capacity	
	Desirable	Maximum
Through Bays (DIDO)	8	12
Drive In Reverse Out (DIRO)	6	8

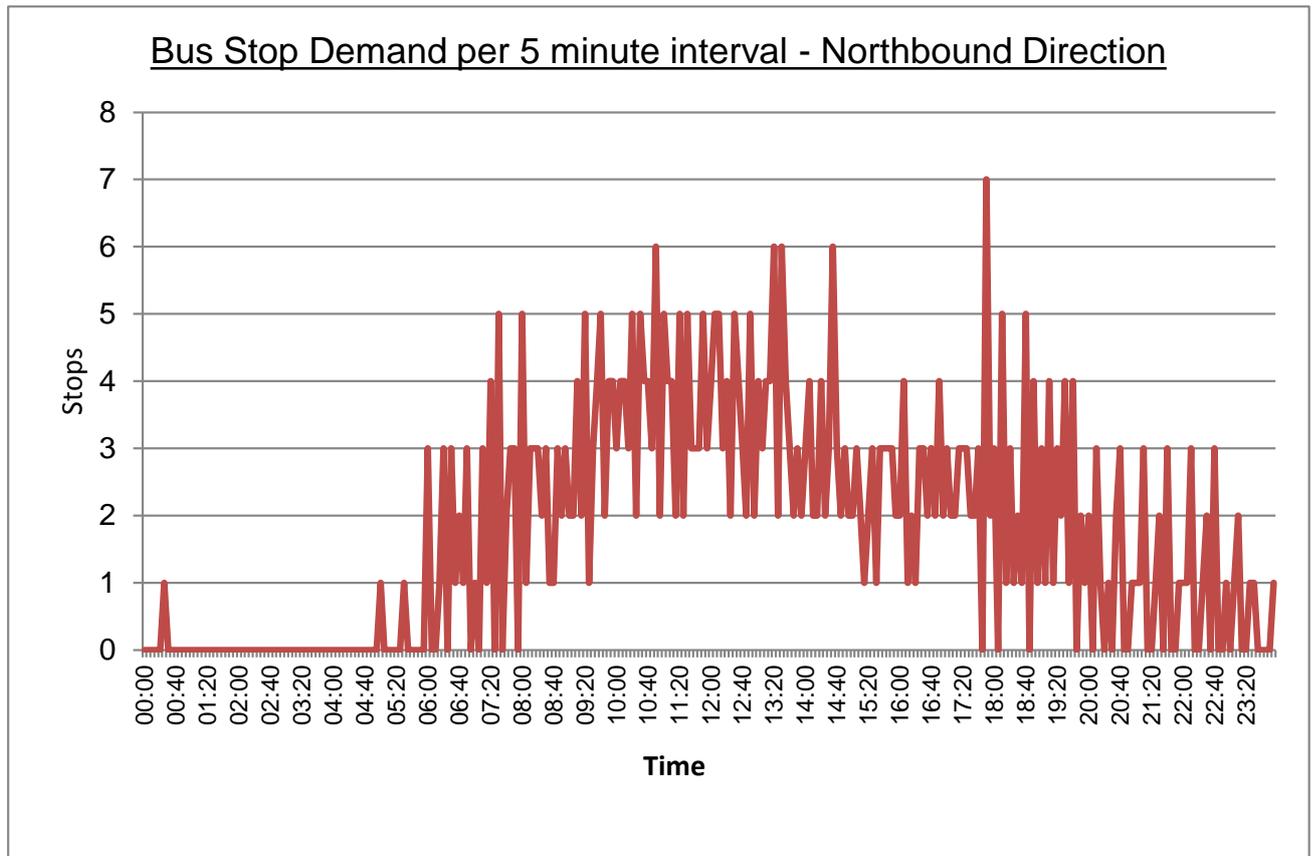
Source: Good Practice Guide for Bus Station Design (2007)

- 3.2.46. Therefore, the current anticipated theoretical capacity of Maidstone Bus Station would be between 88 (desirable) and 132 (maximum) bus services per hour, before consideration is given to bus routing (i.e. north or southbound), commonality of destination between services etc.
- 3.2.47. It is also noted that the above guidelines typically relate to managed bus stations with co-ordinated timetables and therefore the capacity does not account for operational delays and other disruptions to the bus network.
- 3.2.48. The guide also presumes that the design and layout of the bus bays is of a standard which facilitates safe, reliable and easy access, which the constraints of the existing bus station do not quite allow.

Bus Stop Utilisation

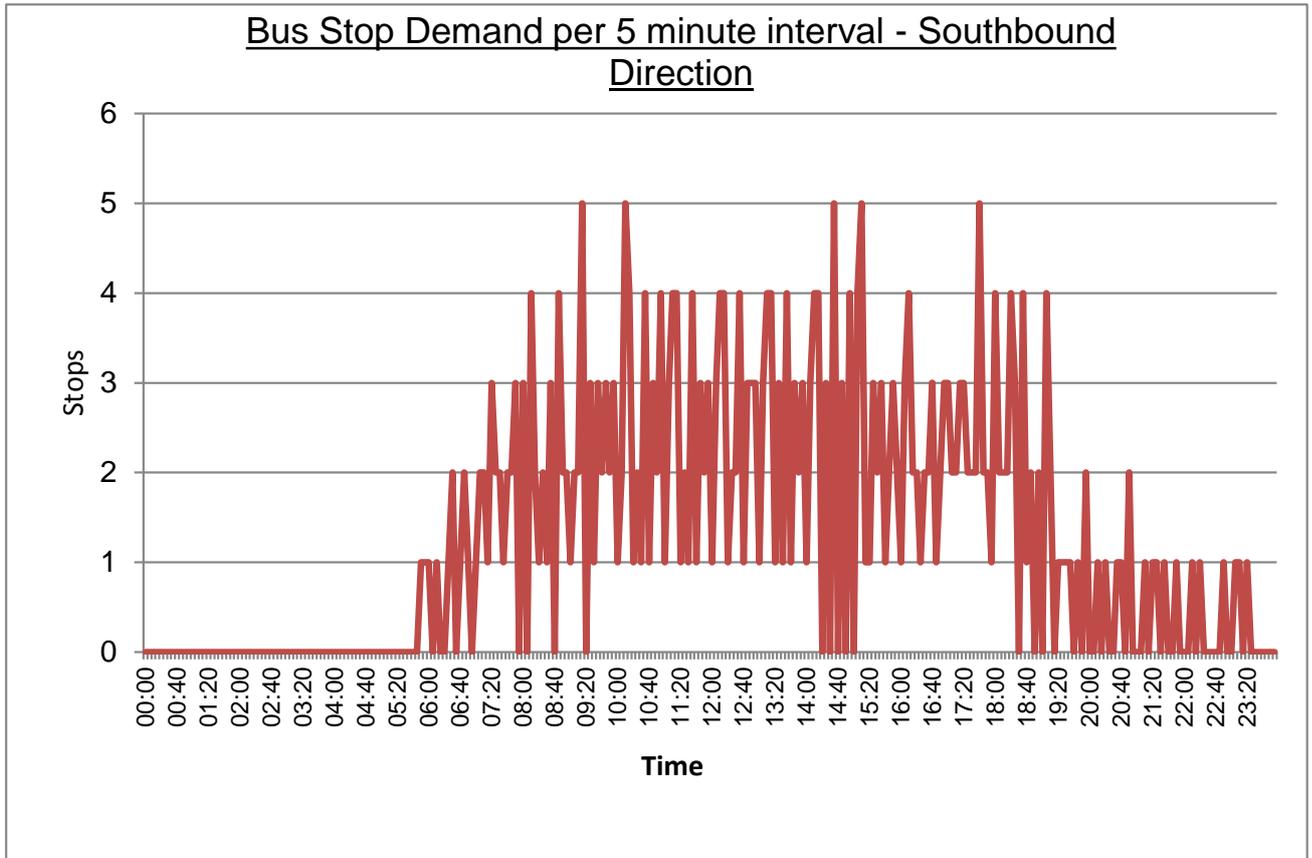
- 3.2.49. As noted above, utilisation of the individual bus stops is dependent upon the exact timetable and allocation of services to common stops. From the timetable data, it is possible to identify that more buses head in the northbound direction from Romney Place to King Street (approximately 58% of movements), consequently requiring greater use of stops H1-H5 than stops J1-J6. Figure 9 and Figure 10 show within each 5-minute interval, the number of stops which are needed to provide for all services. As noted above, the timetable data does not indicate how long any departing buses may have been laying over at the stops and therefore pressure on space may be more acute than shown.
- 3.2.50. This analysis does however demonstrate that within the time period 17:50 – 17:55 stops H1 – H5 have the most intensive usage, with 7 departures within that time, albeit that in the 5 minute periods either side of that, the number of departures is 0 and 2 respectively. With only 3 northbound stops currently in active use, during periods with 6 departures all of the stops would have to be used twice to achieve an equal distribution, with a departing window of up to 2.5 minutes each. Again, this is theoretically possible in terms of allocation of services to stops but does not give much leeway and accordingly, any delays or operational disruptions are likely to exacerbate the challenge of all buses accessing the correct stop without blocking the rest of the bus station.
- 3.2.51. In the early morning and evening there is a clear pattern of usage of at least 3 bus stops, rising to 4 or 5 stops during the main body of the day.

Figure 9 – Bus Stop Occupation – Northbound Direction – Stops H1 to H5



3.2.52. For the southbound direction, bus stop utilisation is clearly lower with a peak of 5 stops used in any 5 minute period, while during the main body of the day there is a requirement for 3 or 4 stops, as shown in Figure 10.

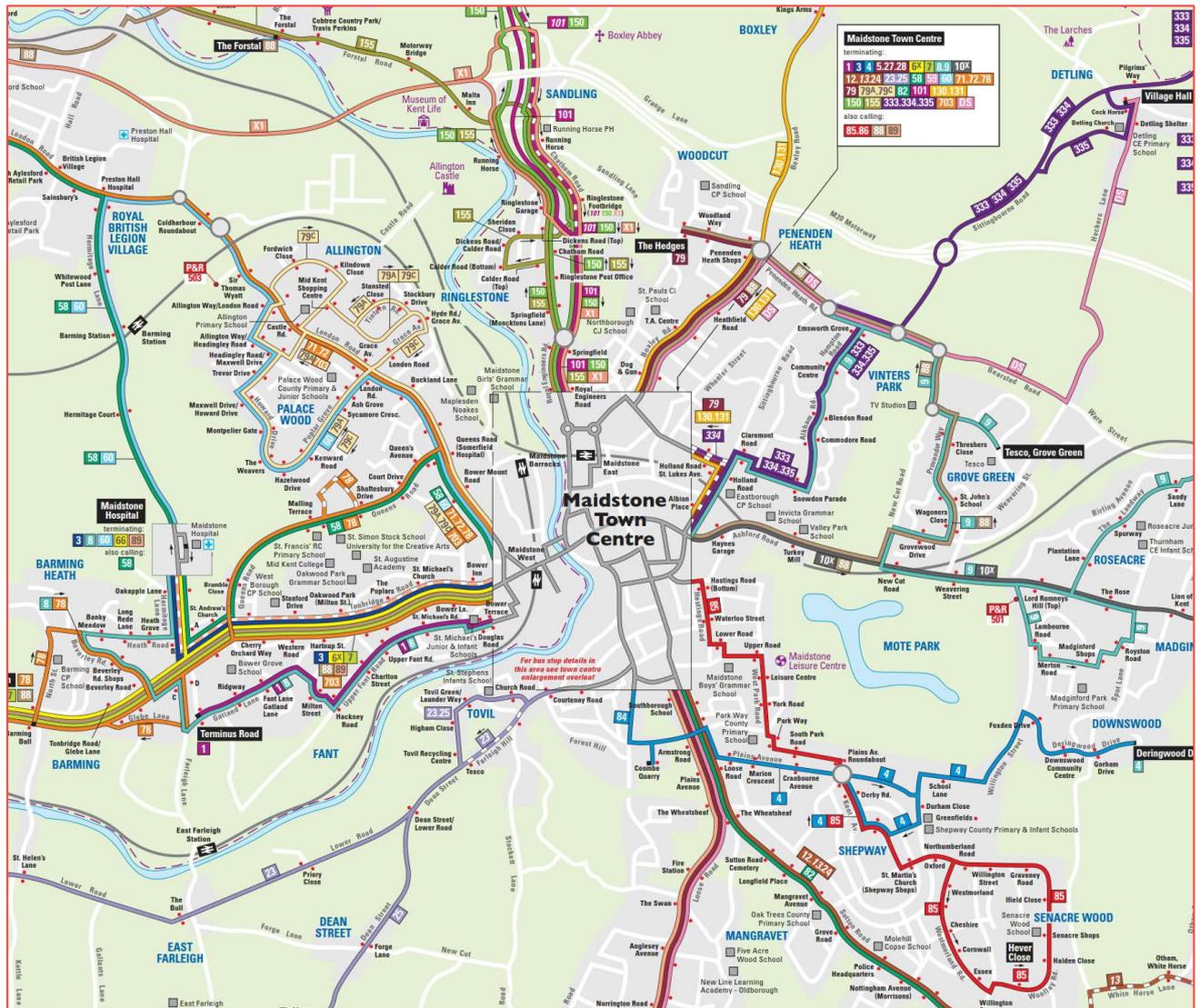
Figure 10 – Bus Stop Occupation – Southbound Direction – Stops J1 to J6



CURRENT BUS ROUTE ANALYSIS

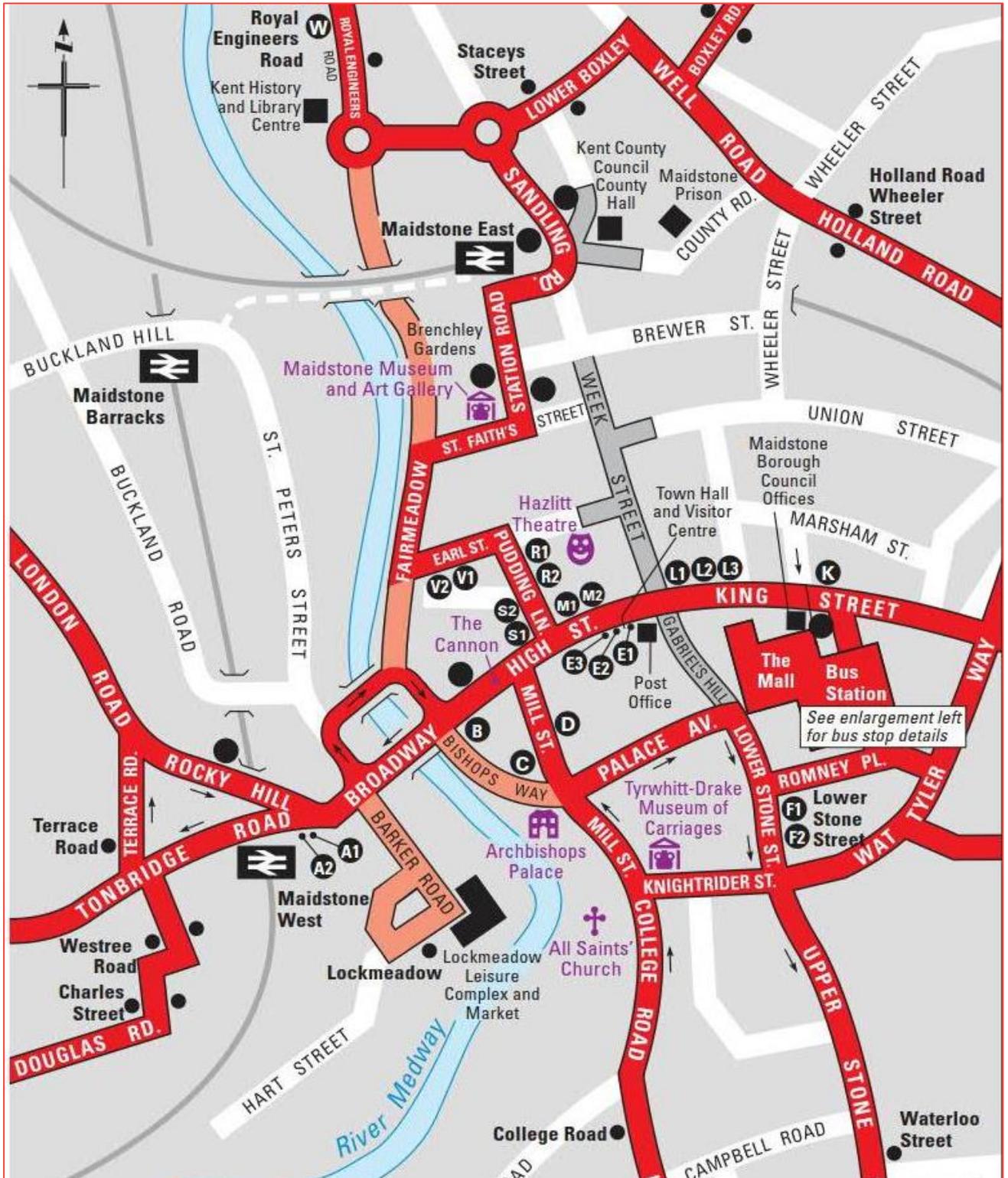
- 3.2.53. This section provides a desktop analysis of the coverage and extent of the local bus network in Maidstone and particularly the combined volume of bus services along key roads within the Town Centre, which is necessary to understand the impact of options to relocate the bus station and/or allocate more buses to on-street stops.
- 3.2.54. Figure 11, which is an extract of the local bus map produced by KCC, shows the geographic extent of local bus routes across Maidstone BUA, with Figure 12 showing the network of roads and streets currently in use as bus routes within the Town Centre, together with the location of bus stops.

Figure 11 – Map of Bus Routes in Maidstone



Source: Kent County Council (April 2017)

Figure 12 – Map of Bus Routes in Maidstone Town Centre



Source: Kent County Council (April 2017)

- 3.2.55. Using the timetable data (for a weekday between 12:00 – 13:00 which is the busiest hour), Figure 13 shows the current level of bus services on the roads and streets approaching the Town Centre, for all services serving Maidstone and not only those accessing Maidstone Bus Station. The data shown (in the blue circles) is the number of buses stopping at each stop per hour and so the larger the bus stop is, the higher the frequency of bus services at the stop.
- 3.2.56. This analysis demonstrates that the bus station is already the single busiest location on the bus network (as it would be reasonable to assume) with 78 buses in the hour but that High Street is very close behind with a total of 68 bus in the hour, spread over only 5 stops.

Figure 13 – Current Maidstone Bus Network – Number of 2-Way Buses per hour - Weekday 1200-1300



Source: TRACC software – traveline Data (April 2017)

- 3.2.57. Table 6 summarises the existing volume of bus services along key radial routes to/from the Town Centre. This confirms that key radial routes such as the A20 London Road and A26 Tonbridge Road to the west, the A229 and Week Street to the north and the A229 one way system (Upper Stone Street and Hayle Road) to the south are the most heavily used by buses.

Table 6 - Bus frequencies on key routes (Weekday 1200 – 1300)

Road / Street	Bus Stop Name	Travel Direction	Buses
Week Street	Maidstone East Railway Station	Northbound	12
		Southbound	8
		2-way	20
A429 Sittingbourne Road	Holland Road	Northbound	4
		Southbound	8
		2-way	12
A20 Ashford Road	Turkey Mill	Westbound	1
		Eastbound	1
		2-way	2
Hastings Road	Crompton Gardens	Northbound	6
		Southbound	6
		2-way	12
A229 Upper Stone Street	Waterloo Street	Southbound	17
A229 Hayle Road	Hayle Road	Northbound	16
A20 Broadway	Maidstone East Railway Station	Westbound	26
A20 London Road	Rocky Hill	Southeast	24
A26 Tonbridge Road	Bower Lane	Westbound	8
		Eastbound	7
		2-way	15
A20 London Road	Somersfield Hospital	Northbound	11
		Southbound	8
		2-way	19

- 3.2.58. More detailed consideration of bus and rail integration will be presented in Chapter 5, but it is noted clearly from Figure 12 that no bus services serve Maidstone Barracks rail station; the closest stops are on the A20 London Road (Somersfield Hospital), a walking distance of approximately 500m. Maidstone East and Maidstone West rail stations are however both located on roads which are primary bus routes.

3.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

INTRODUCTION

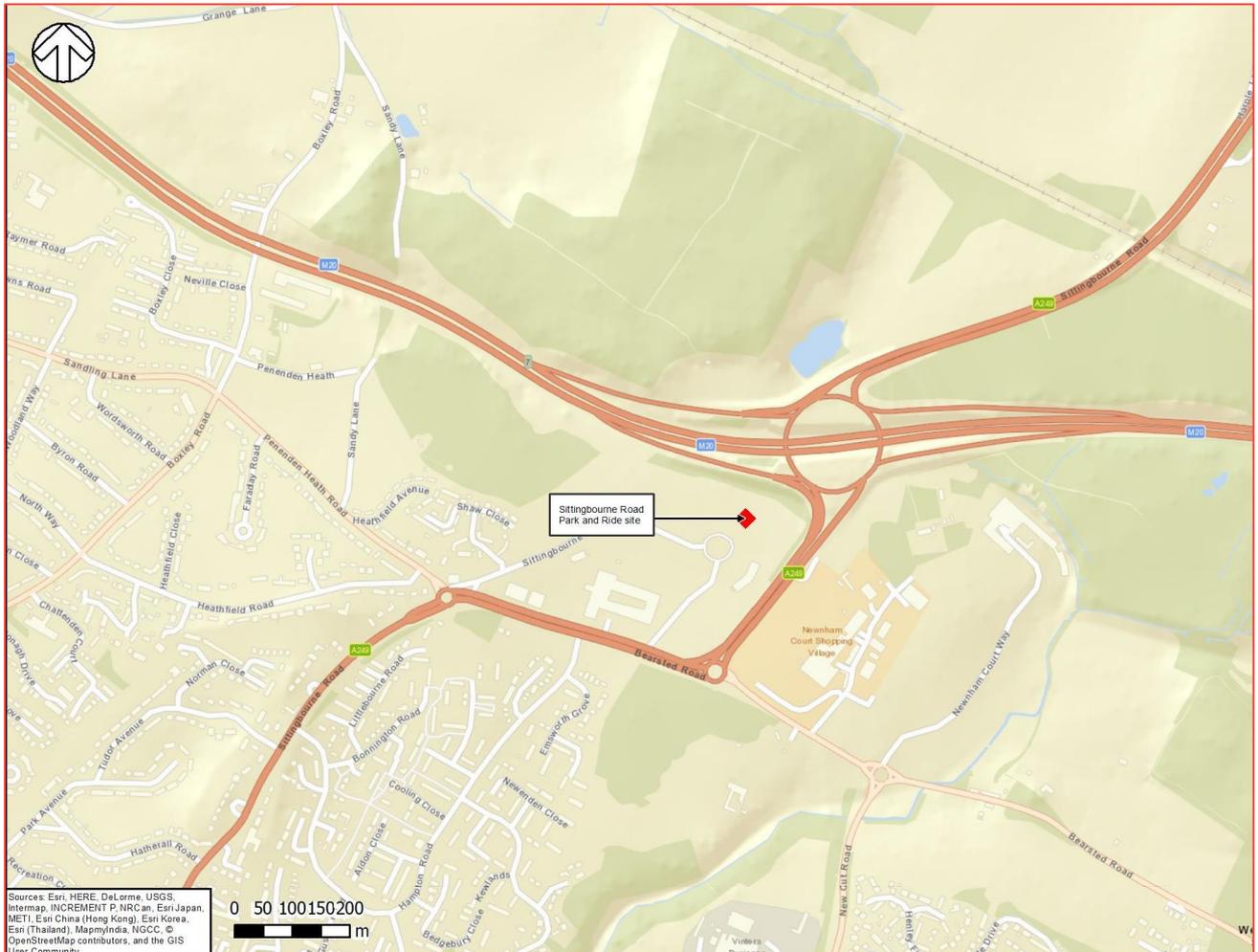
- 3.3.1. Work carried out by MBC for the “Maidstone Bus Station Options Appraisal” identified some potential sites for the introduction of one or more improved bus station interchanges.
- 3.3.2. With the aim of identifying a suitable site to act as a passenger facility as well as an operational base, it is important to take into account the local urban background, particularly given the current bus station is well located for the existing pattern of retail development in the Town Centre.

- 3.3.3. The location of a conventional bus station, or other form of transport 'hub', needs to enable passengers to access, within close walking range, the key facilities and amenities provided in the Town Centre. In addition, to promote 'door to door' journeys by all forms of public transport, the location should also ideally be in close walking range of at least one of the main railway stations.
- 3.3.4. As with most towns and cities, constraints on available space will limit the scope for introducing a bus interchange on some sites within the compact and economically-active urban area. Land availability and ownership will also dictate the deliverability of a bus station or other interchange, however at this stage, such as assessment is not required as part of this strategic study.
- 3.3.5. The short-listed options cover the following sites, with the Town Centre location of these sites shown in Figure 14 and the location of the out of town site shown in Figure 15:
- Maidstone Bus Station (The Mall);
 - Maidstone East Station (either short term or Royal Mail Redevelopment);
 - King Street (On-street);
 - The Broadway Centre; and
 - Sittingbourne Road, Park and Ride site.

Figure 14 – Potential Bus Interchange Sites – Town Centre



Figure 15 – Potential Bus Interchange Sites – Sittingbourne Road Park & Ride Site



EXISTING BUS STATION

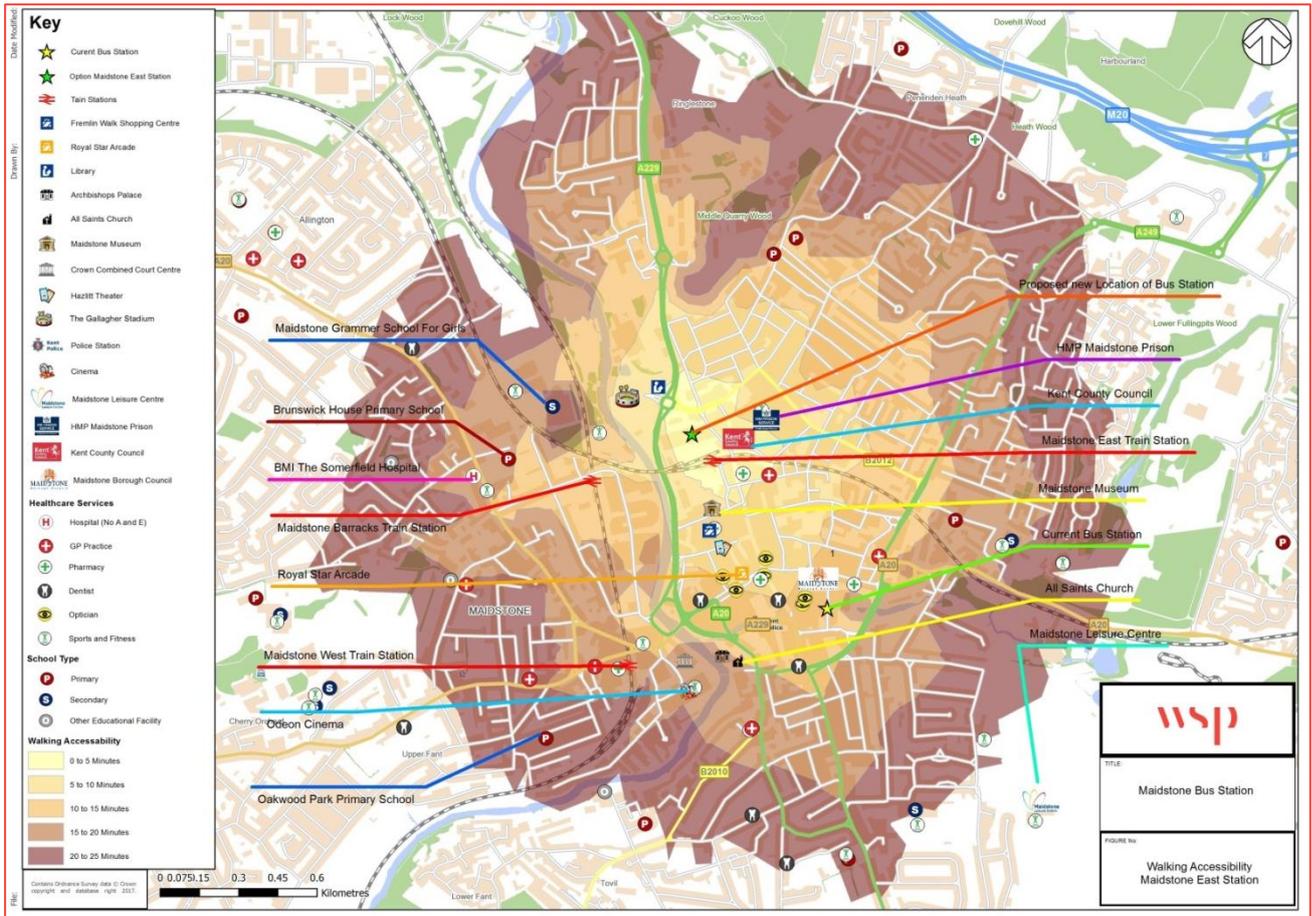
- 3.3.6. The location of the existing bus station is described earlier, with Figure 3 demonstrating that the bus station is conveniently located within the Town Centre.
- 3.3.7. It is noted that Capital and Regional have recently made a substantial investment in the fabric of The Mall – according to their website “In 2016 we completed a dramatic £6 million refurbishment of The Mall Maidstone, modernising the 500,000 sq ft centre and delivering a re-energised, more vibrant, shopping environment”. The scope of the project is reported as follows:
- 3.3.8. “Externally, the previous dated entrances to The Mall on King Street and Gabriel’s Hill have been updated to attract attention creating a much fresher, more welcoming look to the shopping centre. At King Street the old canopy was removed to open up the entrance and provide a view from Week Street to the centre, with a dramatic and modern treatment on the surrounding walls, including updated brand signage. The Gabriel’s entrance has been enlarged taking advantage of previously underutilised space to provide better access to the lower level of the centre, and impressive volumes reflecting the scale of the shopping centre.

- 3.3.9. Internal works included the installation of new contemporary flooring, a state of the art LED linear ceiling lighting system, and a new sharper look to pilasters throughout the Mall. The lifts and toilet facilities have also been revitalised. Bulkheads were removed from around the main atrium to allow more natural light to shine through, and augment the retailer visual connectivity between lower and upper shopping malls.”
- 3.3.10. Attending to the appearance, signage and lighting are all investments which need to be made to the existing bus station if it is to be brought up to date and the same architects (ESA Capita Architects) developed a proposal for replacement and refurbishment of the fabric of the bus station, including doors, lights, floors, glazing, canopy and surface treatment. This was the subject of an unsuccessful bid for capital funding to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership in June 2016.

MAIDSTONE EAST STATION / ROYAL MAIL REDEVELOPMENT

- 3.3.11. Maidstone East Station is located towards the northern edge of the Town Centre, adjacent to Kent County Council’s offices at County Hall. The Royal Mail redevelopment site is located just north of Maidstone East Station, and is bounded to the west by the A229 and to the south by the railway line.
- 3.3.12. Several bus services already use Week Street and Station Road, such as routes X1, 79, 101, 130, 131, 150 and 155. The existing bus stops are located on Week Street although the London-bound platform is accessed from Station Road. A pedestrian link is provided parallel to the railway line on the southside and connects to the other side of the river, and is the most direct walking route to Maidstone Barracks rail station.
- 3.3.13. From its junction with Station Road, Week Street is pedestrianised as part of the heart of the Town Centre, which reduces walking time to connect to other facilities and amenities. Figure 16 provides walking isochrones across the Town Centre and demonstrates that a number of notable locations would be readily accessible from either the existing bus stops at Maidstone East Station or the Royal Mail site, such as the County Council offices, Maidstone Prison, Maidstone Stadium and the Museum. Although these are notable destinations, the footfall to these is much less intensive than to core retail sites in the Town Centre.
- 3.3.14. The site is located further away from the existing concentration of bus services at King Street and The Mall Bus Station and as such would require significant changes to the bus network in order to become the focal point of most or all services.

Figure 16 – East Station / Royal Mail Redevelopment Site



KINGS STREET (ON-STREET)

- 3.3.15. King Street is located to the north of the bus station and therefore provides southbound access to the bus station. In terms of the road network as a whole, King Street leads from the bus priority section of the High Street (to the west) to the A429/A20 gyratory to the east.
- 3.3.16. As described above, the High Street is part of the pedestrianised Town Centre and only buses, taxis and service vehicles are permitted access. Consequently, King Street, between the bus station and High Street, is relatively free of general traffic and many bus services already use the existing on-street bus stops near the Bus Station (bus stop references King Street and King Street K1).
- 3.3.17. Figure 17 provides an overview of King Street's location in relation to the Town Centre. Given its role in access to the bus station, King Street is similarly conveniently located within the Town Centre, and allows easy pedestrian access to many facilities, amenities and workplaces.
- 3.3.18. Between its junctions with Wyke Manor Road and Church Street, King Street is somewhat narrower than along the rest of its length, limiting the scope to introduce further bus stops, unless more radical measures were taken to limit other traffic. It would not be possible to make this section buses only due to other accesses, such as the exit from The Mall car park.

Figure 17 – King Street (On-Street Option)

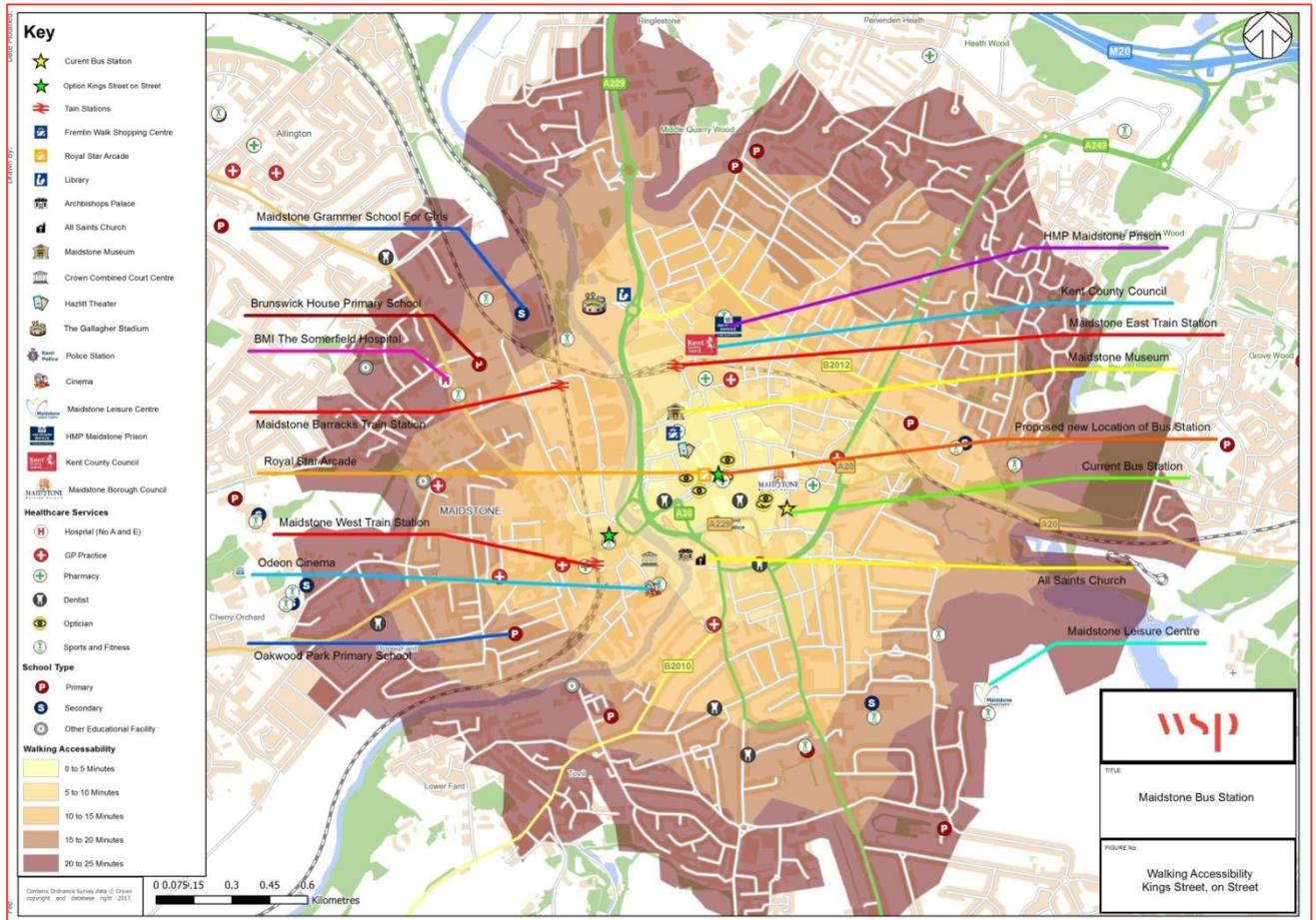


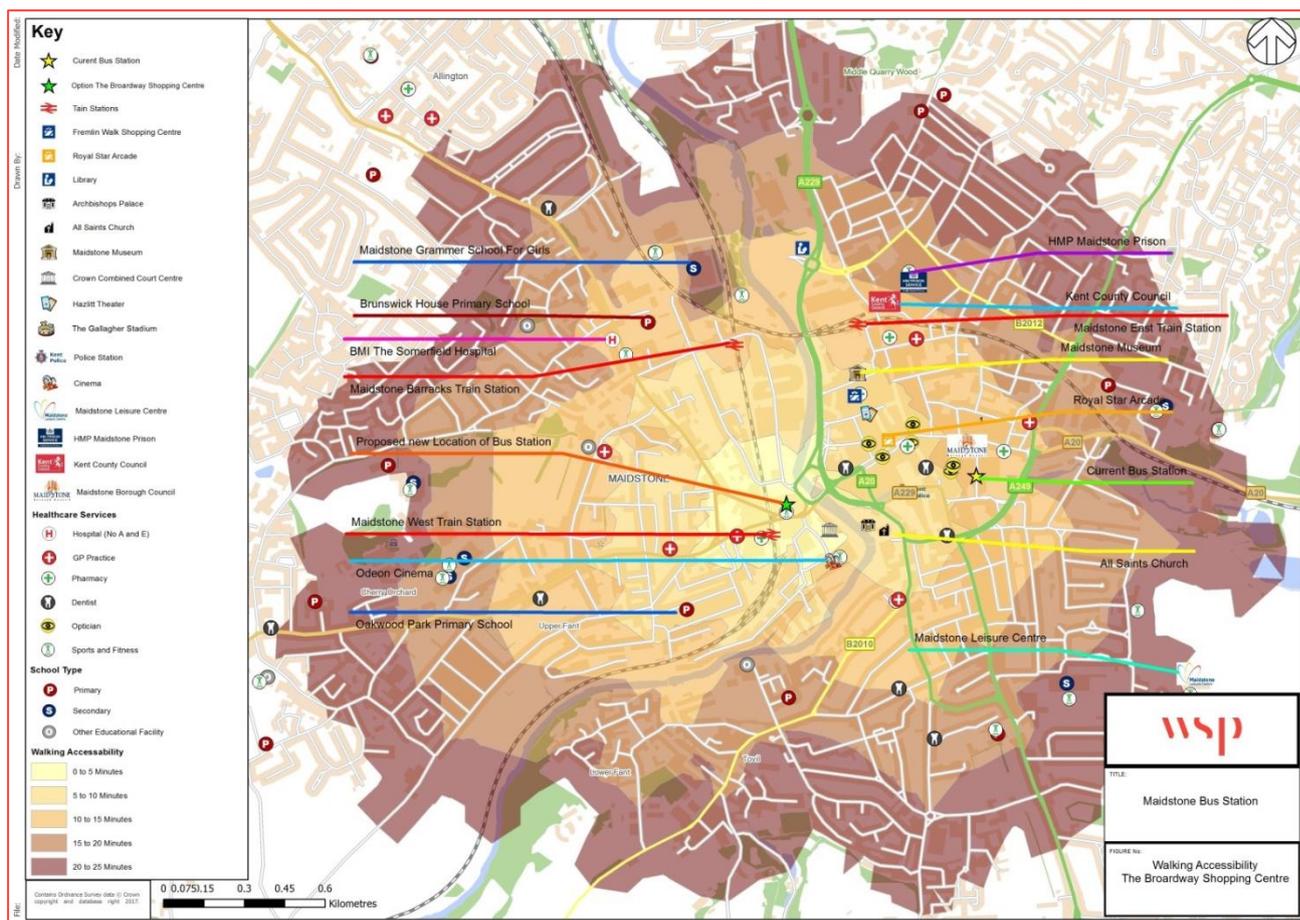
Figure 18 – King Street, between Wyke Manor Road and Church Street



THE BROADWAY CENTRE

- 3.3.19. The Broadway Centre is a shopping centre on the west-side of the River Medway and is home to Matalan, the discount food store Lidl, a gym and other small-scale retail units. The site is located on the north side of the A20, opposite Maidstone West Station, and to the west of the A229 gyratory.
- 3.3.20. Two 'toucan' pedestrian crossings are provided to cross the A20, via the 'island' which sits between the two strands of the A20, and provides a pedestrian link to Maidstone West station and onwards towards the Lockmeadow development.
- 3.3.21. An underpass tunnel is provided to cross the A229 on the west side of the gyratory, and connections to Maidstone Town Centre are completed by the footways on Broadway Bridge.
- 3.3.22. Notwithstanding recent changes to the layout of the gyratory junction, access to The Broadway Centre is still limited by the single direction movements across Broadway Bridge and Fairmeadow Bridge, which would constrain (or at least lengthen) any bus routes which were modified to serve a bus station at this site.
- 3.3.23. Figure 19 shows the location of the site in relation to the Town Centre. Although the site is still located within reasonable walking distance to local facilities and amenities (in addition to Maidstone West Station), pedestrian access to the Town Centre is perceived to be poor. Given the volume of traffic on the A20, which is dual carriageway at this point, any bus station would be likely to have either an access or egress on St Peter's Street, which would be a significant constraint on the time needed to serve the site, even if bus routes which do not currently operate along the A20 were rerouted. Similarly, its location on the west of the river, means that extending services from the east side of the river would incur additional operating resources in order to reach the new bus station, without a corresponding increase in income from passengers attracted to the retail offer at the site.

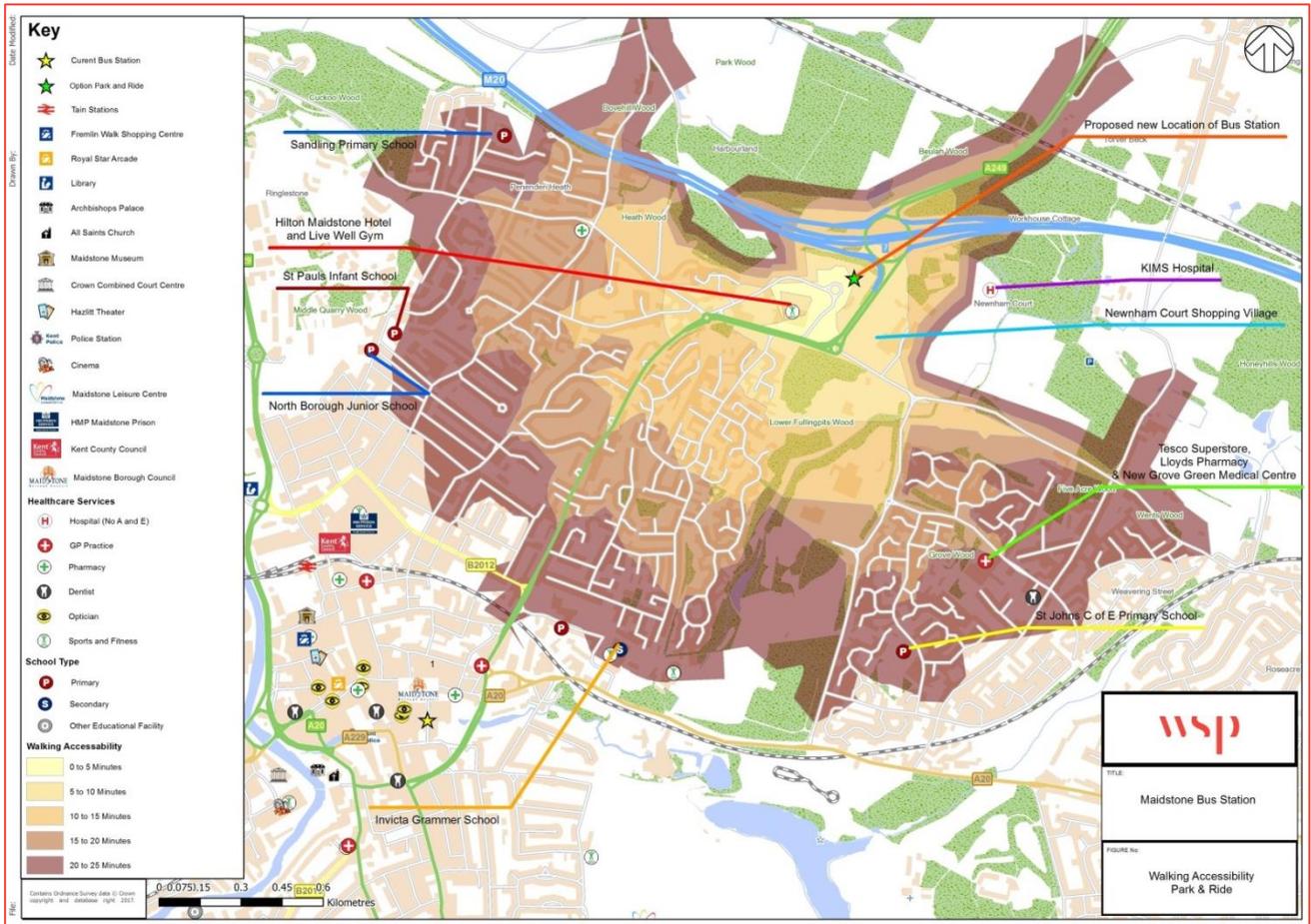
Figure 19 – The Broadway Centre



SITTINGBOURNE ROAD PARK AND RIDE SITE

- 3.3.24. The site of the former Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride service is located on the Eclipse Retail Park beyond the north east of the Town Centre and next to junction 7 of the M20. The site is approximately 3.2km from the Town Centre, which is beyond reasonable walking distance as shown in Figure 20.
- 3.3.25. The site's main attribute is its proximity to the strategic road network and the emerging development of retail and other commercial uses around junction 7. Apart from the existing inter-urban service to Sittingbourne and the local service to Bearsted (service 9), the site is remote from the current and likely future bus network and would therefore not be appropriate for a passenger interchange. The pattern of layover of most services in the current bus station is such that there would not be time in the schedule to travel to this site and back again and therefore it would not be appropriate for an operational layover site either.

Figure 20 – Sittingbourne Park and Ride



ACCESSIBILITY OF SITES

- 3.3.26. The overall accessibility to key facilities by bus passengers will change depending on whether a new site, or sites, are taken forward for a Town Centre interchange. All sites, with the exception of the Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site, are however still located within the Town Centre and therefore the differences are relatively small and consequently each of the sites identified could be acceptable if the existing bus station location became unavailable for some reason in future.
- 3.3.27. Accordingly, the identified Town Centre sites are all located within reasonable walking distance of key facilities and amenities. Table 7 compares each potential location to significant destinations in the Town Centre such as retail centres, cultural amenities (e.g. theatre, cinema) and other civic sites (e.g. police station).
- 3.3.28. Table 7 is also colour coded with the green representing the shortest distance between the potential bus station location and the facility, compared to the other sites, and red being the longest distance. Amber is the median value/distance.
- 3.3.29. The measurements confirm that the Sittingbourne Park and Ride site would be situated the furthest away from any facilities and amenities in the Town Centre and should therefore be ruled out to replace the bus station as a passenger interchange.

- 3.3.30. The measurements demonstrate that the Broadway Centre and Maidstone East Station could each provide a site for a public transport interchange, which would be close to certain destinations, although none of the amenities is likely to produce significant footfall on a regular basis.
- 3.3.31. King Street and the site of the existing bus station are both located within the heart of the Town Centre and therefore represent the greatest opportunities to locate a public transport interchange as close as possible to the main trip generators.

Table 7 - Site Accessibility Cross Examination

Attractions (Distances in KM)	Current Bus Station	King Street	Maidstone East Station/ Royal Mail Site	The Broadway Shopping Centre	Sittingbourne Park and Ride
Maidstone West Train Station	0.95	0.9	1.3	0.2	3.3
Maidstone East Train Station	0.75	0.7	0.16	1.1	2.5
Maidstone Barracks Train Station	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.85	3.1
Fremelin Walk Shopping Centre	0.4	0.35	0.45	0.55	2.6
Royal Star Arcade	0.35	0.3	0.6	0.5	2.8
Library	1.1	1	0.24	1.1	2.6
Archbishops Palace & All Saints Church	0.45	0.7	1	0.5	3
Maidstone Museum	0.65	0.6	0.45	0.7	2.6
Crown Combined Court Centre	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.22	3.2
Hazlitt Theatre	0.5	0.4	0.55	0.65	2.7
Police Station	0.35	0.55	1	0.6	2.8
Odeon Cinema	0.8	0.9	1.3	0.3	3.2
Maidstone Leisure Centre	1.3	1.6	2.2	2	3.4
HMP Maidstone Prison	0.8	0.7	0.4	1.2	2.2
Kent County Council	0.8	0.7	0.15	1.1	2.5
Maidstone Borough Council	0	0	0.85	0.85	2.4
The Gallagher Stadium	1.2	1.1	0.3	1.1	2.7

- 3.3.32. Having ruled out Sittingbourne Park and Ride site, Table 8 provides a comparison between the current bus station site and the potential remaining options for each of the Town Centre facilities and attractions. Again, the table is colour-coded, using red, amber and green to denote the nearest and furthest site for each of the facilities.
- 3.3.33. Table 8 demonstrates that the alternative which would have a similar level of accessibility to the current bus station is on-street stops on King Street.
- 3.3.34. The next location that would have a lower impact on walking accessibility would be the Royal Mail Development site next to Maidstone East Station.
- 3.3.35. The last option, the Broadway Centre, which is situated on the other side of the river from the Town Centre, would increase walking distances to key facilities in the Town Centre and would therefore represent a backwards step in delivering public transport infrastructure which is integrated with trip-generating land uses.
- 3.3.36. It is therefore concluded, that the current bus station and King Street are conveniently situated within the Town Centre and should therefore be the primary focus for development of bus stopping facilities. The other Town

Centre sites could however be considered as secondary bus interchanges, with the potential to increase services at the train stations, thereby better integrating bus and rail services.

Table 8 - Distance Comparison between Sites

Attractions (Distances in KM)	Current Bus Station	King Street	Maidstone East Station/ Royal Mail Site	The Broadway Shopping Centre
Maidstone West Train Station	0.95	-0.05	0.35	-0.75
Maidstone East Train Station	0.75	-0.05	-0.59	0.35
Maidstone Barracks Train Station	1.3	-0.1	-0.5	-0.45
Fremlin Walk Shopping Centre	0.4	-0.05	0.05	0.15
Royal Star Arcade	0.35	-0.05	0.25	0.15
Library	1.1	-0.1	-0.86	0
Archbishops Palace & All Saints Church	0.45	0.25	0.55	0.05
Maidstone Museum	0.65	-0.05	-0.2	0.05
Crown Combined Court Centre	0.9	-0.1	0.3	-0.68
Hazlitt Theatre	0.5	-0.1	0.05	0.15
Police Station	0.35	0.2	0.65	0.25
Odeon Cinema	0.8	0.1	0.5	-0.5
Maidstone Leisure Centre	1.3	0.3	0.9	0.7
HMP Maidstone Prison	0.8	-0.1	-0.4	0.4
Kent County Council	0.8	-0.1	-0.65	0.3
Maidstone Borough Council	0	0	0.85	0.85
The Gallagher Stadium	1.2	-0.1	-0.9	-0.1

3.3.37. Another option for the development of bus stopping facilities near to Maidstone East rail station, but closer to the heart of the Town Centre, is Station Road towards its junction with St Faith's Street. Although servicing of premises on Station Road and Week Street takes place from this area, the road is relatively lightly-trafficked for the Town Centre and thus could be used to develop more stopping facilities than are provided for by the current bus stop adjacent to Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery.

Figure 21 – Station Road, junction with St Faith's Street



Figure 22 – Station Road, looking towards St Faith's Street



3.4 INTEGRATION AT RAIL STATIONS

CONTEXT

- 3.4.1. Maidstone Borough is well-served by rail, at least in terms of the number of stations located across the network. Although train timetables for mainline services are focussed on travel to/from London, the number of stations and frequency of services play an important role in accessibility across the borough in terms of connections between villages by rail.
- 3.4.2. The brief for this project required a summary appraisal of opportunities for integration and each one of the borough's rail stations has been reviewed in turn. The nature of the rural stations, quite often on the edge of the conurbation, means that bus stops for rail replacement services are very often much closer to the station building than bus stops for regular public buses. One of the reasons for this being possible is that demand for car parking is very much lower at the time when rail replacement services operate and therefore greater flexibility can be exercised in the use of scarce space.
- 3.4.3. All stations are covered by the rail franchise run by South Eastern Trains, with the new Integrated Kent Franchise (covering domestic High Speed and all local rail services, except for those which operate out of Kent to Brighton and Redhill as part of the neighbouring Southern network) set to start in December 2018. The DfT's consultation on the new franchise closed on 30th June 2017.
- 3.4.4. In addition to a 'Welcome to' poster, it is noted that each South Eastern station has a poster with 'Onward Travel Information' covering:
- Local area map
 - Buses map (location of bus stops)
 - Main destination by bus (list)
 - Taxis (name and number of taxi companies)
 - Further information about all onward travel (contact details)
- 3.4.5. Such standard posters are a very good initiative as long as the information within and between the two posters is consistent and up-to-date (which it was not always found to be). Some stations also have a separate 'Rail replacement bus services from' poster.
- 3.4.6. For the purposes of considering greater bus and rail timetable integration, it is recognised that current rail timetables are both a fixture (i.e. will not be amended for the purposes of linking with local buses, given the complexity of train scheduling across the network) and are likely to change in December 2018.
- 3.4.7. Rail times, given in the format of minutes past the hour (xx:00), are for the Monday – Friday daytime, off-peak frequency. At peak times, the timing of services differs and therefore some greater opportunity may exist for bus services to be adjusted for better integration. It is however the case that most rural and inter-urban bus services tend to have some kind of flow of school pupils, with consequent tailoring of the timetable, and therefore this will limit any scope for re-timing.
- 3.4.8. Distances to bus stops are measured from train station building to the nearest single bus stop. It is noted that with very few exceptions, the nearest bus stops to the borough's train stations do not have bus shelters.

TOWN CENTRE STATIONS

MAIDSTONE BARRACKS



Railway line	Strood to Paddock Wood
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	No bus services use Buckland Hill
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 2 trains per hour to Strood (xx:05 and xx:35); 1 train per hour to Tonbridge (xx:25); 1 train per hour to Maidstone West (xx:55)
Distance to nearest bus stop	486m, London Road
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses stop immediately to the north of the railway line, just before the narrowing of the bridge. Given the gradient of the road as well as the visibility at this point, it may be difficult to site a permanent bus stop, in the event that any bus service wished to use Buckland Hill.
Opportunities to improve signage	Given the distance to the nearest bus stops and the proximity to the town centre, the demand for interchange is likely to form a very small part of the passenger demand at this station. Nevertheless, additional signage could be installed at the top of the steps leading from the platforms to direct passengers wishing to make a connection to Maidstone East (to the right) and buses on London Road (to the left)
Other	It is noted that the 'Welcome to' poster states that "Buses to local destinations stop in Buckland Road", which is not correct and conflicts with the 'Onward Travel Information' poster (which correctly shows the nearest bus stops on London Road). Better integration would depend primarily on the development of the bus network to serve Buckland Hill and/or St Peter's Street.

MAIDSTONE EAST



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Maidstone East
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	79 – Maidstone to Penenden Heath (2 buses per hour) 89 – Maidstone to Coxheath (1 journey early morning from Coxheath) 101 Sapphire – Maidstone to Gillingham via Chatham (every 12 minutes) 130 – Maidstone to Twydall (broadly every 2 hours) 131 – Maidstone to Twydall, with a few journeys to Medway Maritime Hospital (broadly every 2 hours) 150 – Maidstone to Walderslade (broadly every 2 hours) 155 – Maidstone to Chatham (hourly) X1 – Maidstone to King's Hill (hourly)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 2 trains per hour to London (xx:10 and xx:33); 2 trains per hour to Ashford International (xx:19 and xx:56)
Distance to nearest bus stop	82m, Week Street
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses use the drop-off/pick-up area at the entrance to the London-bound platform, which is subject to special traffic management arrangements to enable buses to reverse at this point. As such, it is not suited to the operation of frequent bus services.
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the Ashford-bound platforms, where buses are sign posted, it is quite a short distance to, and reasonably apparent where, the bus stops are located. From the London-bound platform, where buses are not sign posted (although taxis are), intermediate signage would be potentially welcome but not essential.
Other	The 'Onward Travel Information' provides considerable details about the adjacent bus services and also notes that "Buses to destinations not listed above also leave from Chequer's Bus Station, High Street and King

Street". As set out in the bus route analysis above, Station Road/Week Street is already one of the busiest corridors for bus movements in the Town Centre with buses serving a wide range of destinations from the bus stops adjacent to the station. Further integration could be facilitated by the development of additional bus stops in Station Road.

MAIDSTONE WEST



Railway lines	London to Maidstone West (High Speed) Strood to Paddock Wood
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Maidstone to Barming (irregular – up to 5 journeys per day) 3 – Maidstone to Maidstone Hospital (every 20 minutes) 5 – Maidstone to Sandhurst (1 journey from Cranbrook in the AM peak) 6/6X – Maidstone to Tunbridge Wells (certain journeys at school times) 7 – Maidstone to Tunbridge Wells (every 20 minutes) 8 – Maidstone to Maidstone Hospital (irregular – up to 6 journeys per day) 9/509 – Maidstone to Bearsted (certain journeys at school times) 10X – Maidstone to Ashford (certain journeys at school times) 021 – London to Dover (National Express – two journeys in each direction) 23 – Maidstone to Goudhurst (certain journeys at school times) 24 – Maidstone to Sandhurst (1 journey, Tuesdays only) 26 – Maidstone to Yalding (school times only) 28 – Maidstone to Marden (school times only) 58 – Maidstone to Wrotham Heath (irregular – up to 6 journeys) 59 – Maidstone to Grafty Green (1 journey, school times only) 60 – Maidstone to Maidstone Hospital (irregular – up to 6 journeys)

	<p>71 – Maidstone to Snodland (4 buses per hour)</p> <p>72 – Maidstone to King's Hill (half-hourly)</p> <p>78 – Pembury to Maidstone (irregular – up to 5 journeys)</p> <p>79A – Maidstone to Allington (irregular – up to 3 journeys)</p> <p>79C – Maidstone to Allington (irregular – up to 6 journeys)</p> <p>88 – Maidstone to King's Hill (irregular – up to 2 journeys)</p> <p>155 – Maidstone to Chatham (certain journeys at school times)</p> <p>266 – Kilndown to Maidstone (1 journey in each direction, Tuesdays only)</p> <p>503 P&R – Maidstone to London road (every 20 minutes)</p> <p>505 – Maidstone to Lockmeadow (off-peak, every 20 minutes, Tuesdays only)</p> <p>570 – Maidstone to Wrotham (school times only)</p> <p>572 – Maidstone to King's Hill (school times only)</p> <p>576 – Maidstone to King's Hill (school times only)</p> <p>774 – Downswood to London (2 return journeys at peak times)</p> <p>785 – Maidstone to London (2 return journeys at peak times)</p> <p>X1 – Maidstone to King's Hill (hourly)</p>
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 3 return journeys to London St Pancras International (peak times only); 2 trains per hour to Strood (xx:03 and xx:33); 1 train per hour to Tonbridge (xx:28);
Distance to nearest bus stop	60m, Broadway
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	The rail replacement bus stop is immediately outside the station building, and as such will require traffic management measures within the car park in order to facilitate buses turning.
Opportunities to improve signage	Signage within the station already points to buses and the exit onto the A20. Given the outbound bus stops are immediately outside, no further signage is considered necessary for these although for the inbound bus stop on the other side of the road, some intermediate signage would be potentially welcome but not essential.
Other	Better integration (in terms of a more pleasant waiting environment and closer access for eastbound-bound buses) would require substantial development of the highway network.

OTHER STATIONS

BARMING



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Maidstone East
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	58 – Wrotham Heath to Maidstone (irregular – up to 5 journeys per day) 60 – Maidstone Hospital to Maidstone (irregular – up to 6 journeys per day) 575 – Kings Hill to Maidstone (school times only)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Ashford (xx:50); 1 train per hour to London (xx:38) Given the absence of regular bus services on this section of Hermitage Lane, and common destination of Maidstone town centre on all routes (where rail services are quicker), no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.
Distance to nearest bus stop	152m, Hermitage Lane
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses are shown as departing from immediately outside the entrance to the station, rather than the existing bus stops. Given the proximity of the bus stops to the station, no change is proposed.
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the platforms, where buses are signed, it is quite a short distance to, and readily apparent where, the single station exit is and therefore intermediate signage between the platforms and Hermitage Lane would be potentially welcome but not essential.
Other	There is no pavement or marked pedestrian lane through the narrowed entrance to the station, which may be a slight deterrent to bus use. Given the rate of development along Hermitage Lane, and the proximity of Maidstone Hospital, it may be possible to pool developer contributions to pump-prime the operation of more regular bus services on this section of Hermitage Lane.

BEARSTED



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Maidstone East
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	9 – Maidstone to Bearsted (half-hourly at xx:12 and xx:42 to Maidstone and xx:01 and xx:31 to Bearsted) 64 – Grove Green to Cornwallis Academy (school times only) A dedicated shuttle service to Leeds Castle also operates from Bearsted Station.
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 2 trains per hour to London (xx:03 and xx:28); 2 trains per hour to Ashford (xx:02 and xx:25). Given the short distance either walking or by bus to Bearsted village, and common destination of Maidstone town centre in the other direction, no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.
Distance to nearest bus stop	36m, Ware Street
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses already use the existing bus stops.
Opportunities to improve signage	Signage within the station already points to buses and the exit onto Ware Street. Given the bus stops are immediately outside no further signage is considered necessary.
Other	The bus stop is in both directions (i.e. no formal stop heading towards Maidstone) but this is not indicated on the existing bus stops flag on the bus stop heading towards Bearsted.

BELTRING



Railway line	Strood to Paddock Wood
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	No bus services operate along Gravelly Ways.
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Strood (xx:15); 1 train per hour to Tonbridge (xx:43)
Distance to nearest bus stop	1,217m, Branbridges Road
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses are shown as departing from immediately outside the entrance to the station. Although the road width and level crossing do not make this location ideal, there are no other practical locations in the immediate vicinity of the station.
Opportunities to improve signage	Given the absence of bus services on the eastern side of the A228 at this point, no additional signage is considered necessary.
Other	It is noted that the 'Welcome to' poster states that "Buses to local destinations stop in Beltring Road", which is not correct and conflicts with the 'Onward Travel Information' poster (which correctly shows that no buses operate along Gravelly Ways). Better integration would depend primarily on the development of the bus network to serve Gravelly Ways, although this is very unlikely given the deeply rural nature of the area.

EAST FARLEIGH



Railway line	Strood to Paddock Wood
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	No bus services operate along Farleigh Lane and Station Hill.
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Strood (xx:27); 1 train per hour to Tonbridge (xx:31)
Distance to nearest bus stop	368m, Lower Road
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	The 'Welcome to' poster indicates that rail replacement buses use the nearest bus stops on Lower Road. Other information at the station indicates that rail replacement buses use the station car park. Given the width restriction on the Farleigh Lane bridge over the River Medway, any bus service which wished to serve the station (for example, the conceivable extension of service 1 from Terminus Road) would have to come from the Barming direction and turn around in the car park, which would be unlikely to be feasible during times of normal rail services.
Opportunities to improve signage	Given the lack of footpaths and the gradient of both Farleigh Lane and Station Hill, it is unlikely that many passengers would wish to interchange at East Farleigh at present and therefore the existing signage is adequate.
Other	It is noted that the 'Welcome to' poster states that "Buses to local destinations stop in Station Road", which is not correct and conflicts with the 'Onward Travel Information' poster (which correctly shows the nearest bus stops on Lower Road). A poster concerning a car park closure due to rail replacement buses was displayed although no such closure was in operation on the day.

HARRIETSHAM



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Maidstone East
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	10X – Maidstone to Ashford (hourly at xx:11 to Maidstone and xx:07 to Ashford)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Ashford (xx:32); 1 train per hour to London (xx:47) Given the relatively short distance to walk within the village, and common destinations of Maidstone and Ashford, (where rail services are quicker and more frequent), no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination with local buses.
Distance to nearest bus stop	294m, West Street
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses already use the existing bus stops.
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the platforms, where buses are signed, it is quite a short distance to, and readily apparent where, the single station exit is and therefore intermediate signage between the platforms and West Street would be potentially welcome but not essential.

HEADCORN



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Tonbridge
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	<p>12 – Tenterden to Maidstone (half-hourly arriving at xx:22 and xx:52 from Maidstone and departing at xx:25 and xx:50 to Maidstone. Hourly at xx:52 to Tenterden and arriving at xx:50 from Tenterden)</p> <p>24 – Sandhurst to Maidstone (1 journey in each direction, Tuesdays only)</p> <p>66 – Headcorn to Cornwallis Academy (school times only)</p> <p>HC – Linton to High Weald Academy (school times only)</p>
Timetable coordination	<p>Rail services: 2 trains per hour to Ashford (xx:15 and xx:45); 2 trains per hour to London (xx:15 and xx:45)</p> <p>Service 12 already provides for reasonably-timed connections heading towards Maidstone and Tenterden, however the downside is that connections on to trains requires passengers to wait.</p>
Distance to nearest bus stop	10m, station approach
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Services 12 and 66 already terminate at the stop at the station entrance.
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the platforms, where buses are signed, the terminal bus stop is immediately outside the station building and it is readily apparent how to exit the station. Therefore, intermediate signage between the platforms and Station Road are not necessary as the bus stops are very close by and clearly visible.
Other	The bus stop post at the station entrance is leaning markedly.

HOLLINGBOURNE



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Maidstone East
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	13 – Maidstone to Hollingbourne (irregular – up to 6 journeys)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Ashford (xx:28); 1 train per hour to London (xx:59) Given the relatively long walk from the platforms along the station approach road to the nearest bus stops, the infrequent bus service, and common destination of Maidstone, (where rail services are quicker and more frequent), no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.
Distance to nearest bus stop	580m, Eyhorne Street
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	The 'Onward Travel Information' poster shows that rail replacement buses use the station car park whereas the 'Rail replacement' poster shows that such buses use the bus stops on Eyhorne Street at the end of the Station Approach.
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the platforms, where buses are signed, the route along the station approach road is very simple, albeit lengthy. Therefore, intermediate signage between the platforms and Eyhorne Street is not necessary.

LENHAM



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Maidstone East
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	10X – Maidstone to Ashford (hourly at xx:04 to Maidstone and xx:12 to Ashford)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Ashford (xx:36); 1 train per hour to London (xx:52) Given the relatively short distance to walk within the village, and common destinations of Maidstone and Ashford, (where rail services are quicker and more frequent), no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.
Distance to nearest bus stop	475m, Ham Lane
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	The rail replacement bus stop is at the entrance to the station access road and requires rail replacement buses to perform a reversing manoeuvre as there is insufficient space to turn around in front of the station building. Therefore, even if the bus operator (Stagecoach) was willing to serve the station, the practical considerations are too great to overcome within the current road layout.
Opportunities to improve signage	Buses are signed from the station and although the route to Ham Lane is relatively straightforward, some additional signage at the junction of Robins Avenue and Beacon Road, would be welcome but not essential.

MARDEN



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Tonbridge
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	<p>23 – Maidstone to Laddingford (irregular – up to 2 journeys per day)</p> <p>25 – Maidstone to Goudhurst (irregular – up to 3 journeys per day)</p> <p>27 – Maidstone to Goudhurst (irregular – up to 2 journeys per day)</p> <p>28 – Maidstone to Marden (1 journey per day)</p> <p>C2 – Yalding to Cornwallis Academy (school times only)</p>
Timetable coordination	<p>Rail services: 2 trains per hour to Ashford (xx:06 and xx:36); 2 trains per hour to London (xx:24 and xx:54)</p> <p>Given the absence of regular bus services on Church Green, no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.</p>
Distance to nearest bus stop	98m, Church Green
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail placement buses depart from beside the station building, in the station car park. As a height barrier is normally in operation, local buses are unable to exit the car park.
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the platforms, where buses are signed, it is quite a short distance to, and readily apparent where, the station exit is and therefore intermediate signage between the platforms and Church Green would be potentially welcome but not essential.

STAPLEHURST



Railway line	London to Ashford International via Tonbridge
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	5 – Maidstone to Sandhurst (only 2 journeys each day serve the bus stop on the Station Approach road)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 2 trains per hour to Ashford (xx:10 and xx:40); 2 trains per hour to London (xx:20 and xx:50)
Distance to nearest bus stop	25m, Station Approach
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Some journeys on service 5 already serve the bus stop on the Station Approach road, which needs less manoeuvring than the rail replacement stop, which is located closer to the station building.
Opportunities to improve signage	The timetable display case at the bus stop on the Station Approach road could advise intending passengers to continue to Station Road for the bus stops served by the main service.
Other	A bid was previously submitted by MBC (with KCC and Southeastern) to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund “to develop outline design options for the station forecourt and agree a preferred option to be taken to detailed design”.

WATERINGBURY



Railway line	Strood to Paddock Wood
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	<p>4/4A – Aylesford to Bennet Memorial School (school times only)</p> <p>6/6A/6X – Tunbridge Wells to East Peckahm (up to 3 journeys in each direction, peak times only)</p> <p>66 – Maidstone Hospital to East Peckham (generally hourly at xx:18 to East Peckham and xx:41 to Maidstone Hospital)</p> <p>78 – Pembury to Maidstone (1 journey each day)</p> <p>266 – Kildown to Maidstone (1 journey in each direction, Tuesdays only)</p>
Timetable coordination	<p>Rail services: 1 train per hour to Strood (xx:22); 1 train per hour to Tonbridge (xx:36)</p> <p>Given the absence of regular bus services on this section of Maidstone Road, and common destination of Maidstone town centre (where rail services are quicker), no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.</p>
Distance to nearest bus stop	148m, Bow Road
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	Rail replacement buses already stop on the main road (and use the Tonbridge-bound stop on Bow Road).
Opportunities to improve signage	Once leaving the platforms, where buses are signed, it is quite a short distance to, and readily apparent where, the station exit is and therefore intermediate signage between the platforms and Maidstone Road/Bow Road is not necessary.
Other	It is noted that the 'Welcome to' poster states that "Buses to local destinations stop in Station Approach Road", which is not correct and conflicts with the 'Onward Travel Information' poster (which correctly shows the nearest bus stops on Maidstone Road/Bow Road). The 'Rail replacement' poster shows that such buses towards Maidstone do not use the bus stop on Maidstone Road but instead stop opposite the junction with Bow Hill, which is different to the 'Onward Travel Information'.

YALDING



Railway line	Strood to Paddock Wood
Frequency of adjacent bus service(s) (weekday, daytime)	207 – Paddock Wood to Tonbridge (school times only) 266 – Kilndown to Maidstone (1 journey in each direction, Tuesdays only)
Timetable coordination	Rail services: 1 train per hour to Strood (xx:19); 1 train per hour to Tonbridge (xx:40) Given the absence of regular bus services on this section of Hampstead Lane, no straightforward opportunities exist for greater co-ordination.
Distance to nearest bus stop	13m, Hampstead Lane
Potential to use rail replacement stop for local bus service	In the event that rail replacement buses do stop on the road, stops are already shared with local bus services.
Opportunities to improve signage	Signage within the station already points to buses and the exit onto Hampstead Lane. Given the bus stops are immediately outside no further signage is considered necessary.
Other	In the 'Welcome to' poster case and in the 'Onward Travel Information' poster, rail replacement buses are shown as stopping on Hampstead Lane (going west) and at the station entrance (going to Yalding). The 'Rail replacement' poster shows that the stop for these buses "is in the station car park by the platform".

3.5 REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.5.1. The redevelopment of the area around Maidstone East, whilst welcome in its own right and for the opportunity to improve interchange between existing bus and rail services, does not of itself mean that the weight of the town centre will move to its northern edge. As The Mall amounts to 49,700sqm and Fremlin Walk totals 33,000sqm the vast majority of the retail ofsqm fer will remain concentrated at Fremlin Walk, Week Street, High Street, Gabriel's Hill and King Street and the predominant residential area (of bus users) in the town is primarily to the south east. Therefore in terms of origin and destination, a primary bus terminating facility is most reasonably located in the area along the High Street/King Street corridor.
- 3.5.2. While the existing Bus Station is in need of major renovation (and complete replacement in the medium to long-term), it should not be forgotten that it has some attributes which would be welcome to retain:
- Integrated with the retail offer
 - Waiting facilities for passengers are fully covered
 - Bus stops have doors closed until buses are ready to board
 - Multi-directional access (north-south, right and left)
- 3.5.3. New bus terminal arrangements should ideally be located:
- Close to the heart of the Town Centre, in the same way that car parks are, so that bus passengers have the same convenience as car drivers (and bus travel can be equally attractive to potential passengers)
 - Close to the main bus corridors in/out of the Town Centre, in order to provide quick access which does not result in unproductive time and distance
 - In roads which are lightly used by other traffic in order to reduce bus/general traffic conflicts and provide a more pleasant waiting environment for bus passengers
 - Where it can be accessed directly from multiple directions, again in order to provide quick access which does not result in unproductive time and distance.
- 3.5.4. Building a business case for a new bus station is however likely to be challenging for either the public or private sector, recognising that town centre land is valuable whereas a bus station itself does not generate a viable income i.e. the benefits are to passengers and in many ways are intangible (convenience, comfort, reassurance).
- 3.5.5. In order to understand the business case for a renewed facility, more detailed research and analysis of bus passenger trips, in terms of connections between services (both local and inter-urban) could be commissioned. This would inform consideration of the type of facility which is needed from the passenger perspective and the level of interchange between town and inter-urban services. This research would ideally be carried out with the support and involvement of bus operators.
- 3.5.6. As long as it is designed to be fit-for purpose, a revised facility, catering for the current overall extent of the bus network, could:
- Be smaller, particularly if services do not layover to the same extent as now; or
 - Be the same size, but provide more capacity for additional services to use the facility; or
 - Be the same size but provide some amount of formal layover space, thus taking such vehicles away from the path of in-service buses.

- 3.5.7. Even where services terminate in the bus station, and there is a requirement for layover, the vast majority of these require a period of no more than 10 minutes. This makes a remote layover facility an impractical solution, as too much of the time would be incurred getting there and back, thus causing journeys of unnecessary time and distance, and resulting in higher emissions. If such a layover facility is required, this could be formalised at the lower end of Earl Street, where extended layover is already known to be taking place.

Figure 23 – Lower end of Earl Street



- 3.5.8. It is not considered that a larger facility is needed for a single bus terminus in the longer-term, as the development of the town and the bus network is likely to lead to more services serving the north and north-west of the town. Terminating buses at Maidstone West is not considered to be a likely development of the bus network due to the constrained road network at that location and the station being relatively remote from the Town Centre.
- 3.5.9. Providing more bus stopping capacity at Maidstone East is considered to be a valid option, with Station Road being the preferred current location as being closer to the Town Centre and in a road where less conflict would arise with other traffic. It should be noted that this would not be at the expense of the existing disabled parking, either on Station Road or Earl Street.
- 3.5.10. Immediate opportunities for better integration between existing bus and rail provision are mainly focussed on information and signage, rather than infrastructure and re-timing/re-routing of bus services.
- 3.5.11. With the new rail franchise, due in 2018, the timing of existing connections will require review and will give rise to the opportunity to consider new connections. In the longer-term, the development of bus services, possibly 'pump-primed' by money from developer contributions, will be necessary to deliver comprehensive integration across stations generally, although some of the very rural stations (e.g. Beltring and Yalding) are likely to continue to be unserved by scheduled conventional bus links due to their remoteness from centres of population.

- 3.5.12. It is also likely that developments in ride-sharing and ‘e-hail’ mobility services could provide greater opportunities for links to rural rail stations (and to/from town centre stations at certain times) rather than the development of conventional scheduled local bus services.
- 3.5.13. As a more radical step, development of the bus network to enhance connectivity to the principal rail stations could take place and while this could be connected to the creation of a secondary bus hub at Maidstone East, it would not necessarily depend on it. A lot of Maidstone’s inter-urban bus services connect towns and villages which currently have equally good if not better rail connections to London than Maidstone (clockwise from the north: Chatham, Rochester, Sittingbourne, Bearsted, Ashford, Headcorn, Marden, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and West Malling) and therefore in pure connectivity terms, there would appear to be a greater need to provide more direct links within the urban area to Maidstone East and Maidstone West than for the hinterland.
- 3.5.14. Therefore, the services which provide the core of the bus network in the Maidstone urban area (defined as those operating at least half-hourly or more frequently) have been reviewed for potential opportunities to provide direct connections to rail stations. The current and potential terminal arrangements would be as follows:

Table 9 – Potential Terminal Arrangements

Service	Route	Daytime Frequency	Current town centre terminus	Proposed alteration	Comment
101 Sapphire	Maidstone - Springfield - Horsted - Huntsman’s Corner - Chatham - Gillingham	12 minutes	Pudding Lane	None	Already serves Maidstone East
9	Maidstone - Grove Green - Madingford - Bearsted	30 minutes	Bus Station	Extend to Maidstone West	As the route already serves Bearsted Station, which has largely the same rail offer as Maidstone East, the developmental option would be to extend to Maidstone West and would re-route via King Street, rather than the bus station
85	Senacre Wood - Shepway - Maidstone	10 minutes	Bus Station	None	As the most frequent service, extending to either Maidstone East or Maidstone West would have the largest resource implication
89	Maidstone - Loose - Coxheath -	20 minutes	King Street	Extend to Maidstone East	The service could re-route via Pudding Lane (and stopping there) on its way to/from Maidstone East
7	Maidstone - Watringbury - Hadlow - Tonbridge - Southborough - Tunbridge Wells	20 minutes	Bus Station	Divert to Maidstone East	As the route already serves Maidstone West, the developmental option would be to extend to Maidstone East and could re-route via Pudding Lane, rather than King Street and the bus station
71	Maidstone - London Road - Allington - Larkfield - Lunsford Park	10 – 20 minutes	Bus Station	No change	Services 71 and 72 provide a combined 10 minute frequency and already serve Maidstone West; as a frequent service the resource implications would be greater than for other options
72	Maidstone - London Road - Allington - Larkfield - East Malling - West Malling - King’s Hill	30 minutes	Bus Station	No change	

- 3.5.15. These changes would reduce arrivals and departures in the bus station by 5 buses per hour and reduce bus traffic in King Street very marginally. The changes would also result in 6 buses per hour terminating at Maidstone East) with 2 buses per hour terminating at Maidstone West (although available bus stops may result in the service not laying over there but instead operating round the A20/A26 gyratory as a non-stop loop). The development of these services is shown diagrammatically in Figure 24 and Figure 25.

Figure 24 – Existing Maidstone urban area services

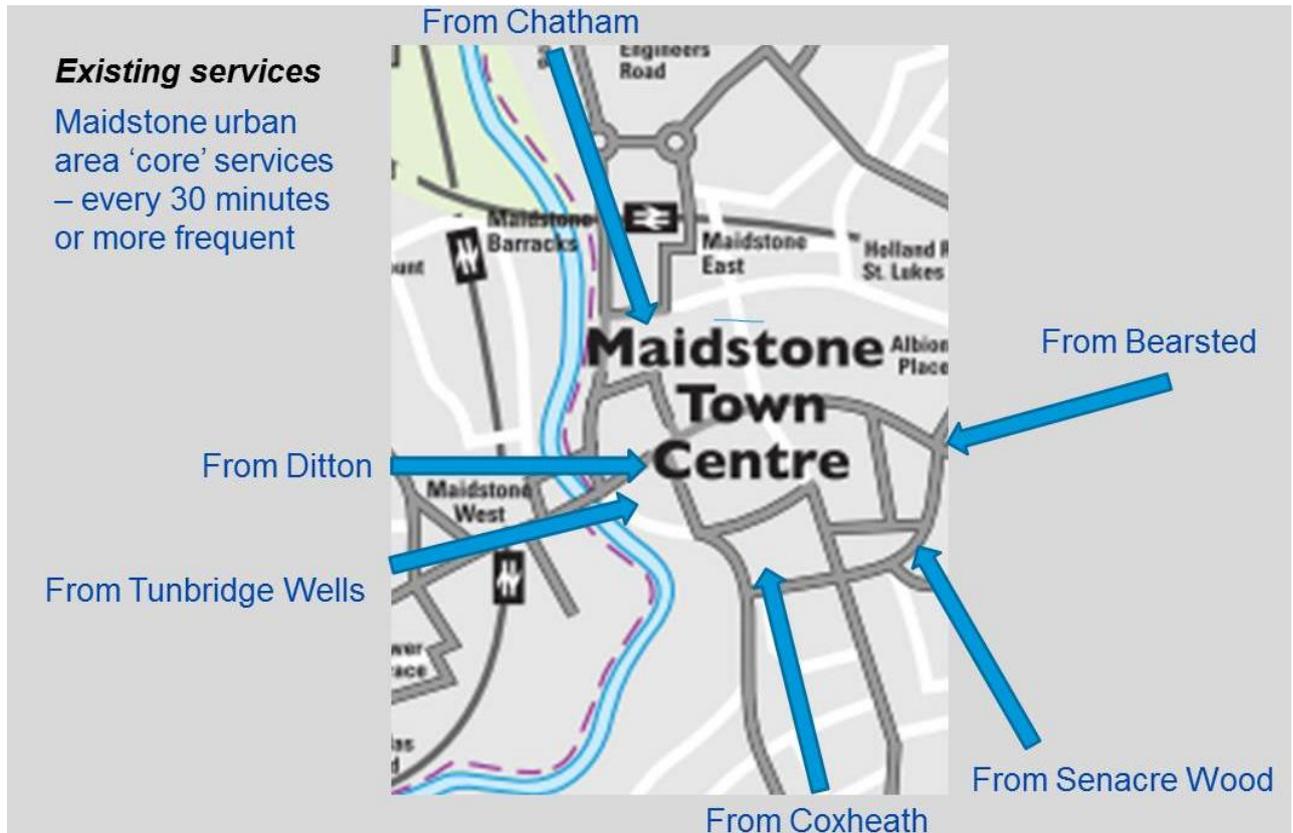
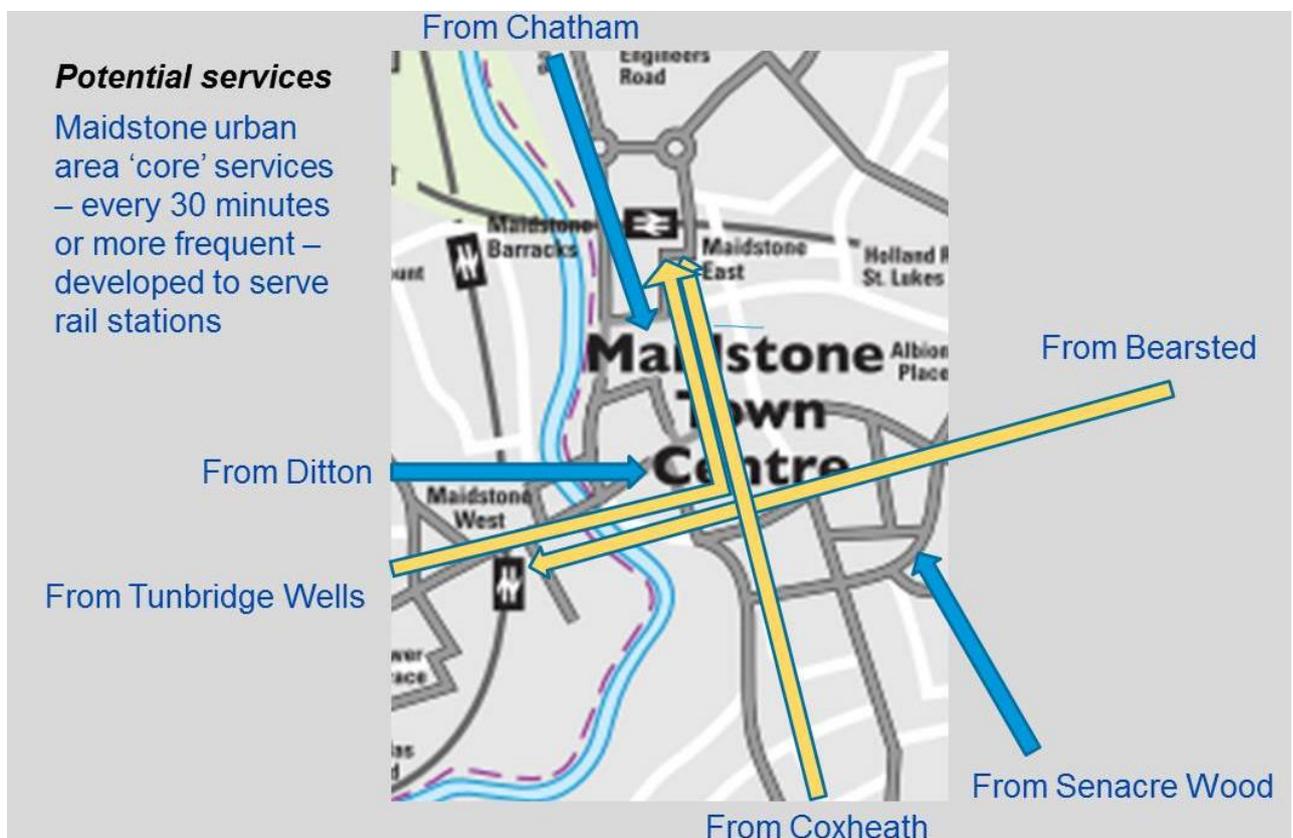


Figure 25 – Potential future Maidstone urban area services - extended to rail stations



2

TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY



4 TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1. The town centre parking strategy sets out to understand the existing town centre parking supply and operation, future demands and then to consider the ITS objectives to optimise long stay parking charges and optimise the level of parking space provision in the town centre.

4.2 CAR PARK DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND ALLOCATIONS

- 4.2.1. A number of town centre car parks are allocated for redevelopment through the current adopted Local Plan. These are:

- H1(12) 180-188 Union Street, Maidstone 30 dwellings
- H1(13) Medway Street, Maidstone 40 dwellings
- RMX1(2) Maidstone East and Sorting Office, Sandling Road, Maidstone 53 dwellings
- RMX1(3) King Street car park and former AMF Bowling site, Maidstone 210 dwellings

- 4.2.2. RMX1(2) requires the provision of commuter car parking to serve Maidstone East railway station. Other allocations do not require the retention or re-provision of any public car parking. That being noted, a planning application for the redevelopment of Union Street car park is pending a decision at the time of writing. This current plan retains a 48 space public car park.

- 4.2.3. A planning application for the redevelopment of Brunswick Street car park is also pending a decision at the time of writing. This current plan retains a 33 space public car park.

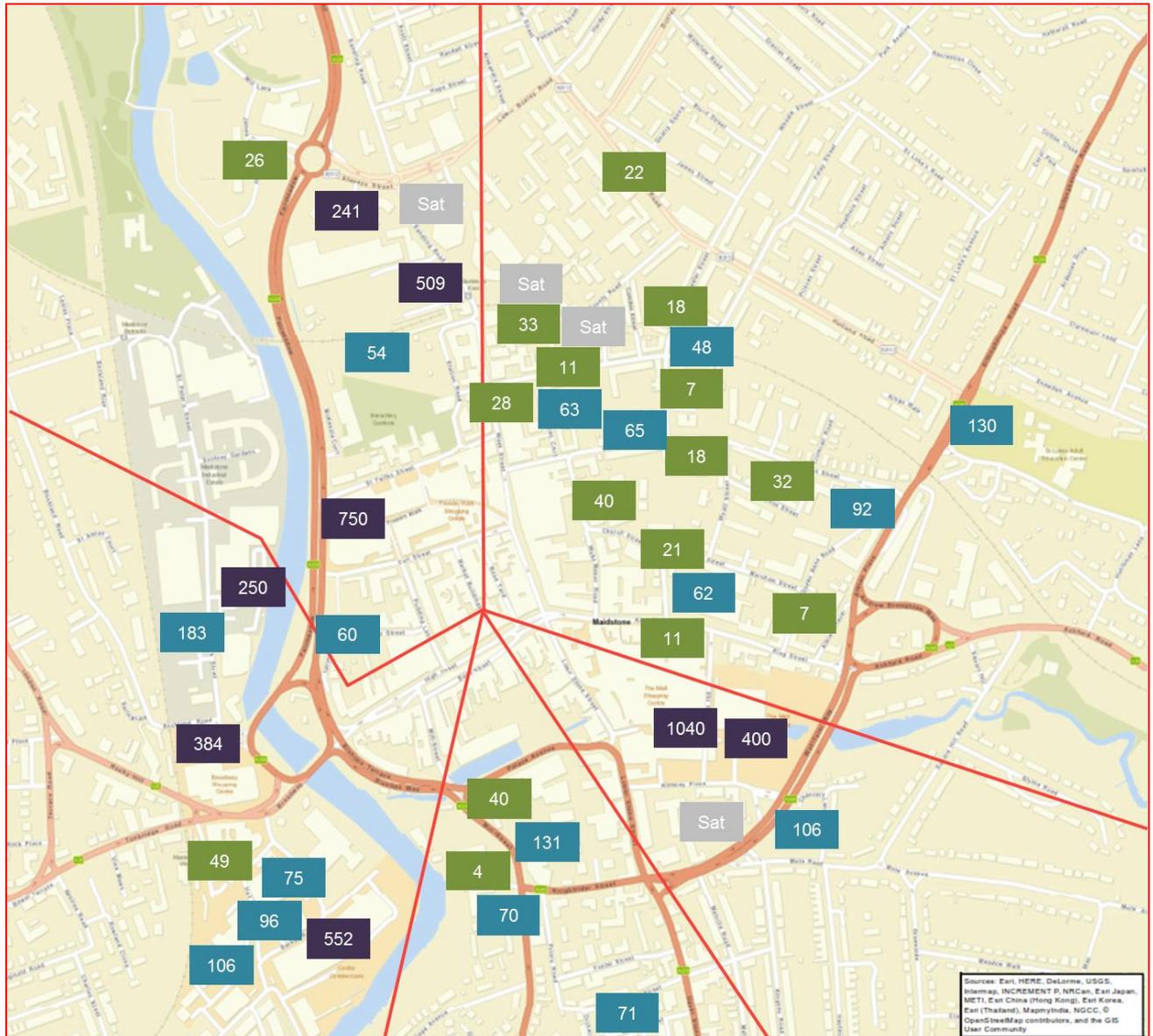
4.3 CAR PARKING SUMMARY

- 4.3.1. The location, size, control and stay limit for the town centre car parking supply is summarised in Figure 26.

4.4 CAR PARKING SUPPLY

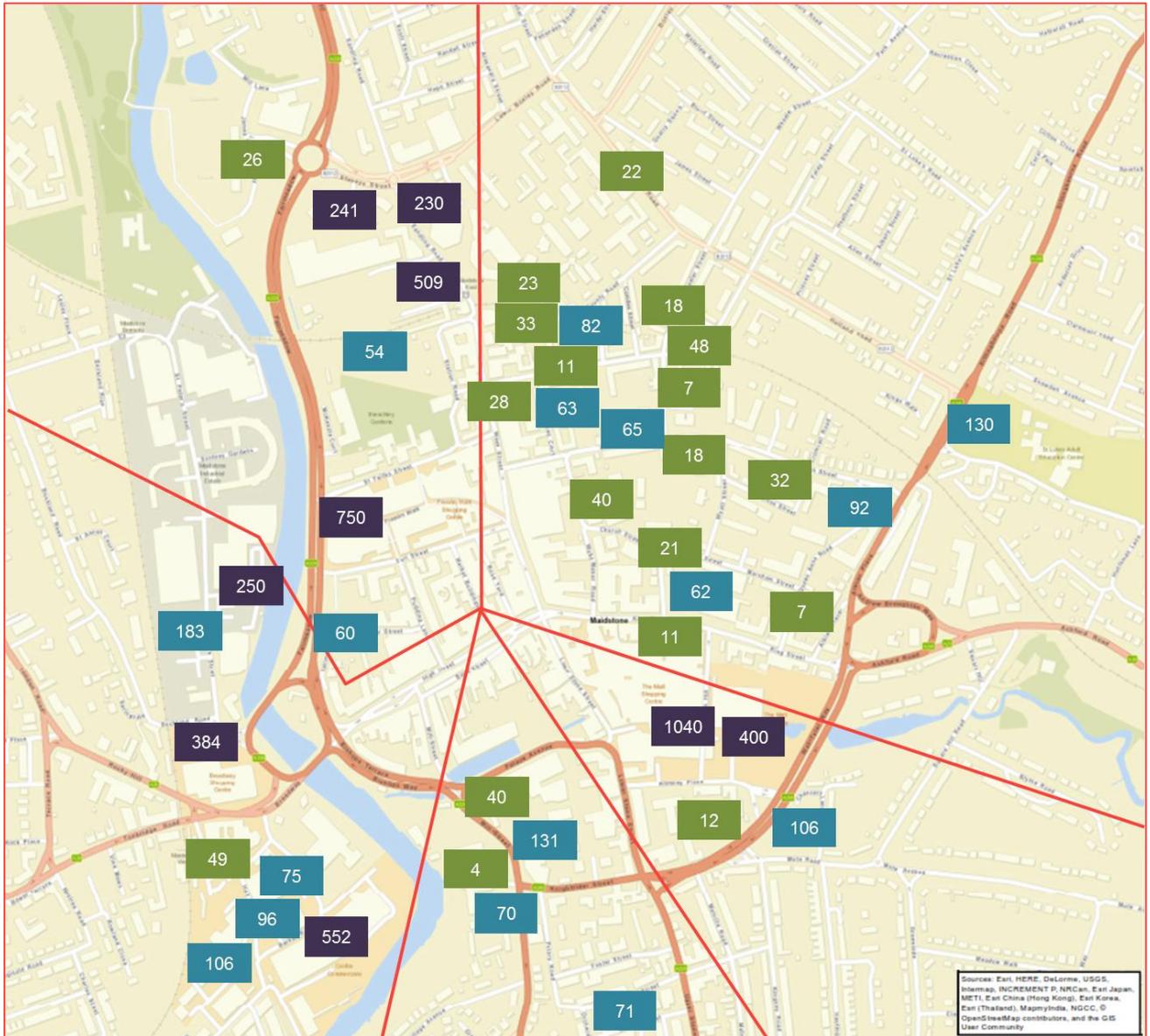
4.4.1. The publicly available car parking supply within Maidstone Town Centre is spread across the centre and made up of a mix of a number of large car parks (predominantly on the western side of the Town Centre and in the south east) with a many more smaller and mid-sized car parks in the remainder of the Town Centre. The north-eastern area of the Town Centre is characterised by a collection of smaller car parks. This is shown in Figure 27.

Figure 27 – Car Parking Supply, Thursday



4.4.2. Additional car parks are available at the weekend, where car parks for employees are opened up to the general public. The overall weekend car parking supply is shown in Figure 28.

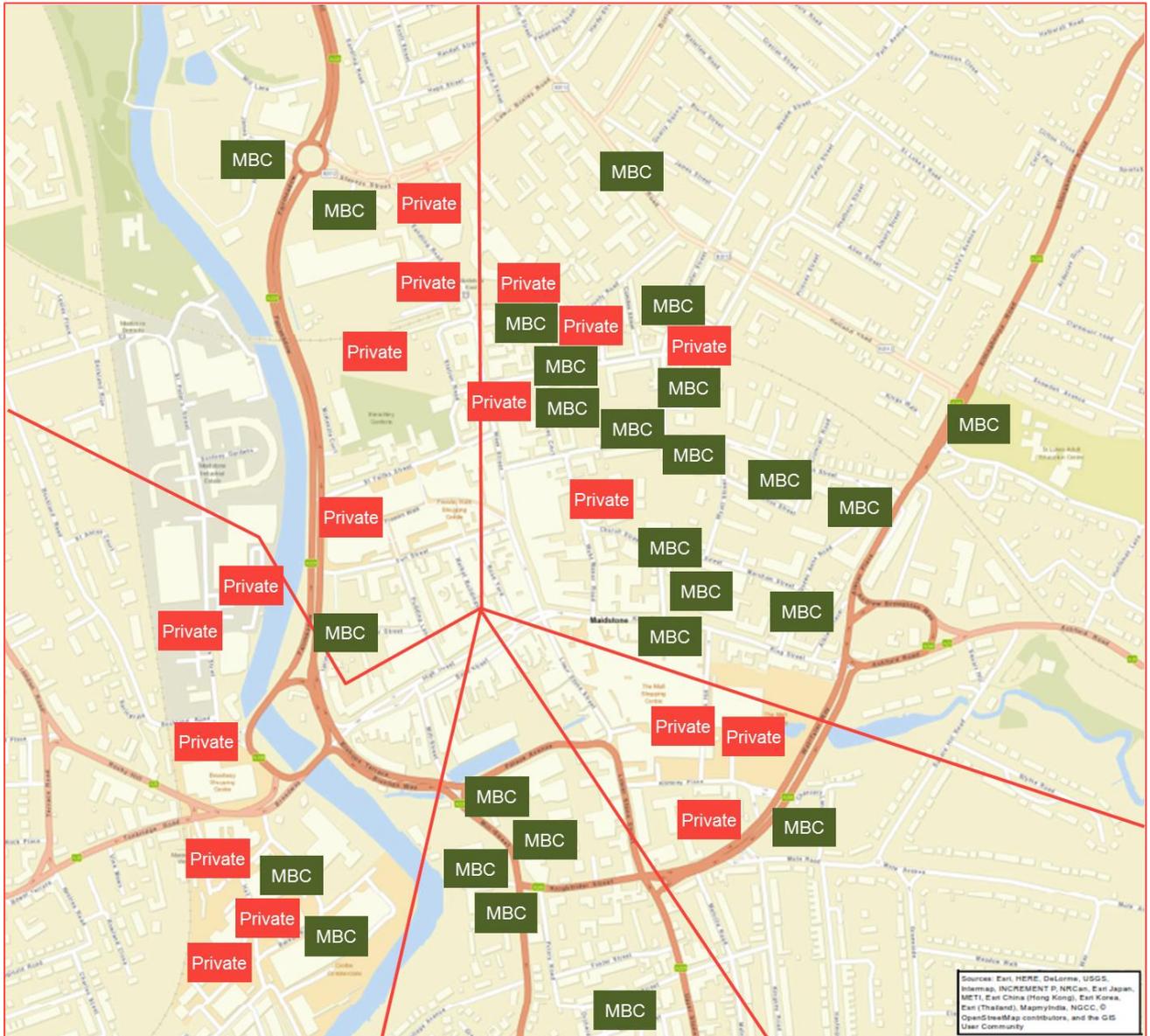
Figure 28 – Car Parking Supply, Saturday



4.5 CAR PARKING CONTROL

4.5.1. The car parking within the Town Centre is substantially controlled by private operators with MBC controlling generally the smaller car parks, with the exceptions of Lockmeadow and Sandling Road which are over 200 spaces. Most of the largest car parks in the town centre (The Mall, Fremlin, Sainsbury's, Broadway, St James) are associated with particular retailers. Maidstone East rail station car park is then the remaining large car park which is privately controlled and primarily serves rail commuters. The car park control is shown in Figure 29.

Figure 29 – Car Parking Control



4.5.2. The majority of the town centre parking supply is located in private car parks (69%) with MBC car parks accommodating just 31% of the supply. Nine car parks make up 70% of the total parking supply (although much of this is associated with big box retail). The supply can be described as follows:

Table 10 – Car Park Control Summary

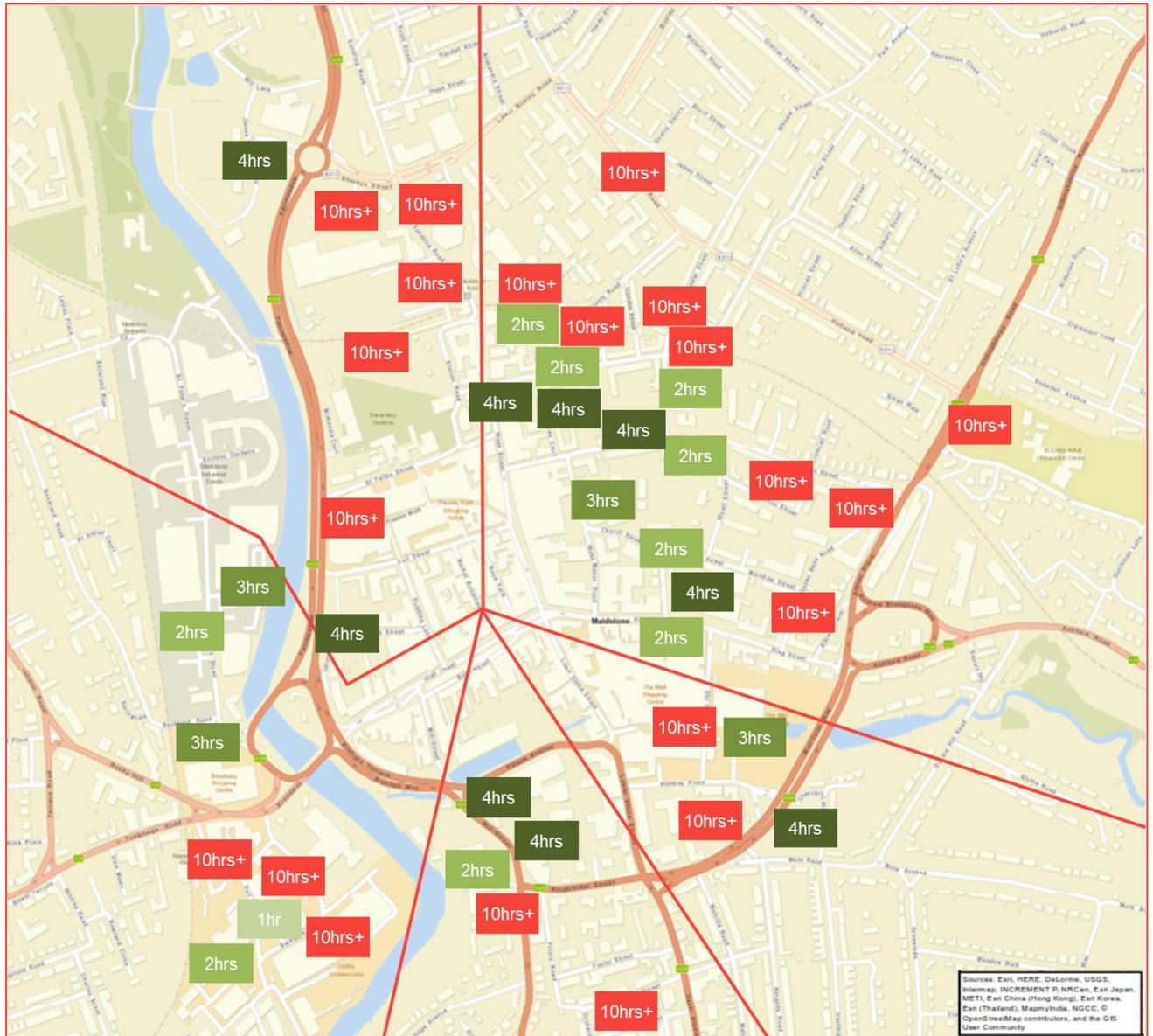
Type	Car Parks	Supply
MBC car parks serving the town centre generally	Lockmeadow, Sandling Road, Mill Street, Mote Road, Sittingbourne Road, Barker Road, College Road, Brewer Street East, Wheeler Street, Brunswick St, King Street, Medway Street, Union Street East, Palace Avenue, Union Street West, Well Road, Lucerne Street, Brooks Place	1,839
MBC on-street parking serving the town centre generally	County Road, James Whatman, Union Street, Church Street, Lucerne Street, Brewer Street, King Street, Wheeler Street, Albion Place, Horseway	136
Private car parks serving the town centre generally	The Mall, Fremlin, Jeffrey Street, Church Street, Lower Brewer Street, Romney Place	1,918
Private car parks serving the town centre at weekends only	Invicta House, Sessions House (Upper), Sessions House (Lower)	335
Private car parks primarily serving big box retail	Sainsbury's, Broadway, St Peters Wharf, Wickes, Hart Street, B&Q	1,419
Rail car parks primarily serving commuters	Maidstone East (North), Maidstone East (South), Maidstone West	612

4.5.3. In addition there are the park and ride car parks at London Road (518 spaces) and Willington Street (400 spaces).

4.6 CAR PARKING STAY LIMITS

4.6.1. The car parks in the town centre operate a ringed system with the most central car parks typically being short stay while the outer car parks are long stay. Partly due to the different bodies controlling car parking and partly due to their primary purposes, the short stay car parks do operate a range of different stay limits (1, 2, 3 or 4 hours). The car park stay limits are shown in Figure 30.

Figure 30 – Car Parking Stay Limits



4.7 CAR PARKING TICKETING

4.7.1. The MBC car parking supply is controlled via a pay & display ticketing, with the option to pay-by-phone. If paying at machine, payment is cash only and pay on arrival. The exception to this is Sandling Road which allows card payments (pay on arrival) and a card tap-in/tap-out pay upon departure in addition to the traditional cash payments for pay and display and pay by phone. Payment mechanisms at other car parks varies, where payment is required, with barrier on entry plus and on foot upon departure at Fremlin and The Mall car parks.

4.8 CAR PARKING TARIFF STRUCTURE

Table 11 summarises the tariff structures for all car parks within Maidstone across both the private and public parking supplies.

Table 11 – Car Parking Tariff Structure

Ref.	Control	<0.5	<1	<1.5	<2	<3	<4	<5	<10	<12	>12hr
Sandling Road	MBC		£1.10			£2.20	£3.50	£6.00			£6.00
Lockmeadow	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Sittingbourne Road	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Barker Road	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
College Road	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Brunswick St	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Union Street East	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Union Street West	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Well Road	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Lucerne Street	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Brooks Place	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	£5.00			£6.50
Mill Street	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	x	x	x	x
Mote Road	MBC		£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	x	x	x	x
Brewer Street East	MBC	£0.50	£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	x	x	x	x
Wheeler Street	MBC	£0.50	£1.00			£2.50	£3.50	x	x	x	x
King Street	MBC		£1.50			£2.50	£4.00	x	x	x	x
Medway Street	MBC		£1.50			£2.50	£4.00	x	x	x	x
Palace Avenue	MBC					£2.50	£4.00	x	x	x	x
James Whatman (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£3.50	£4.50	x	x	x	x
County Road (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
Union Street (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
Church Street (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
Brewer Street (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wheeler Street (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
Albion Place (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
Horseway (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
King Street On-Street (On-S't)	MBC	£0.70	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	x	x	x	x	x	x
London Road P&R	MBC	Free	Free	Free	Free						

Ref.	Control	<0.5	<1	<1.5	<2	<3	<4	<5	<10	<12	>12hr
Willington Street P&R	MBC	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
Sessions House (Upper) Sat-Sun	Private										£2.00
Sessions House (Lower) Sat-Sun	Private										£2.00
Romney Place Sat-Sun	Private										£3.00
Maidstone East (North) Mon-Fri	Private										£5.30
Maidstone East (North) Sat	Private										£3.60
Maidstone East (North) Sun	Private										£1.00
Maidstone East (South) Mon-Fri	Private										£5.30
Maidstone East (South) Sat	Private										£3.60
Maidstone East (South) Sun	Private										£1.00
Maidstone West Mon-Fri	Private										£5.30
Maidstone West Sat	Private										£3.60
Maidstone West Sun	Private										£1.00
The Mall (Multistorey & Rooftop)	Private		£1.50		£2.00	£2.50	£3.50	£4.50			£9.00
Fremlin Sun-Fri	Private		£1.80		£2.30	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£9.50	£9.50	£9.50
Fremlin Sat	Private				£3.00		£5.00	£9.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00
Invicta House Sat-Sun	Private		£0.70			£1.40	£2.70			£5.00	x
Sessions House (Upper) Sat-Sun	Private		£0.70			£1.40	£2.70			£5.00	x
Sessions House (Lower) Sat-Sun	Private		£0.70			£1.40	£2.70			£5.00	x
Church Street	Private		£0.80		£1.50	£2.00	x	x	x	x	x
Jeffrey Street	Private								£5.50	x	x
Lower Brewer Street	Private				£2.00		£3.00	x	x	x	x
Sainsburys	Private		Free			£5.00	x	x	x	x	x
B&Q	Private		Free	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Broadway	Private					Free	x	x	x	x	x
St Peters Wharf	Private					Free	x	x	x	x	x
Wickes	Private			Free	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hart Street Commercial Ctr	Private				Free	x	x	x	x	x	x

4.9 CAR PARKING SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

- 4.9.1. Limited variable message signage is provided on the Fairmeadow (A229), Hayle Road and Sittingbourne Road (A249) approaches to the town centre with parking information presented on The Mall Multi Storey, The Mall Rooftop, Fremlin Walk, King Street and Lockmeadow. More generally, the car parking signage within the town appears to have developed organically with fixed signage for many, some of which notes car parking capacity.

4.10 CAR PARKING DEMAND TRENDS

CAR PARKING DEMAND ACROSS A WEEK

- 4.10.1. Ticket Sales Data for MBC car parks has been analysed to estimate the car parking demand in each of the MBC car parks in five minute intervals across 7 days from May 15th to May 21st 2017 as a recent and neutral week. The results are shown in Figure 31. The data shows that the peaks across the overall MBC controlled parking supply occur on Thursday at c.1100 and on a Saturday at c.1430. Other times of day and other days of the week show a generally lower accumulation. The data indicates a peak accumulation of c.630 on the Thursday and c.670 on the Saturday.

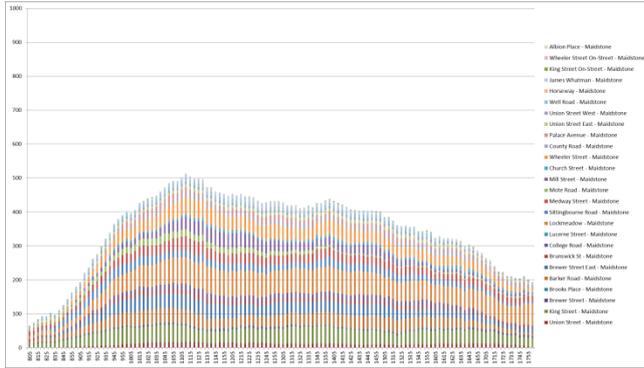
CAR PARKING DEMAND ACROSS A YEAR

- 4.10.2. Ticket Sales Data for MBC car parks has also been analysed to estimate the car parking demand across the MBC car parks on a Saturday for a number of months in 2016. The results are shown in Figure 32. This generally shows a relatively flat demand profile throughout the year with a peak demand of some 800 cars which then slowly ramps up to Christmas reaching 900 in November and 1,000 in December (the last Saturday before Christmas).

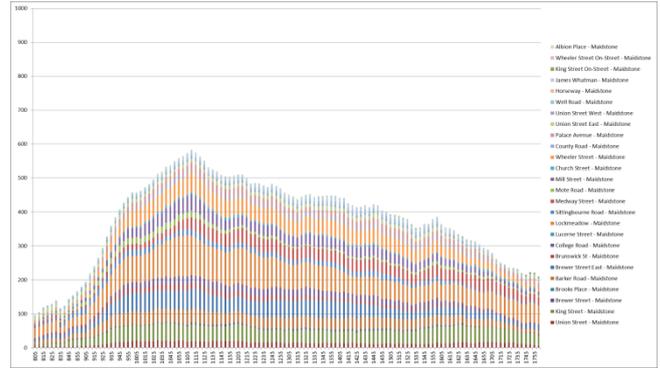
CAR PARKING DEMAND ACROSS FIVE YEARS

- 4.10.3. Ticket Sales Data for MBC car parks has again analysed to estimate the car parking demand across the MBC car parks on each of a Thursday and a Saturday in each year from 2012 to 2016 inclusive. A neutral week in November was selected in all cases consistent with the 2011 Beat Surveys. The results are shown in the Figure 33 and Figure 34. The data indicates a general decline in peak car parking accumulation over time. On a Saturday peak demand reduces from 1150 to 900 and on a Thursday from 900 to 700 in MBC car parks.

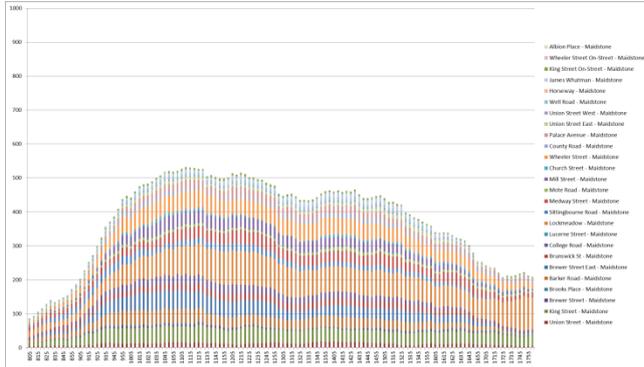
Figure 31 – Weekly Demand Profile for MBC Car Parks



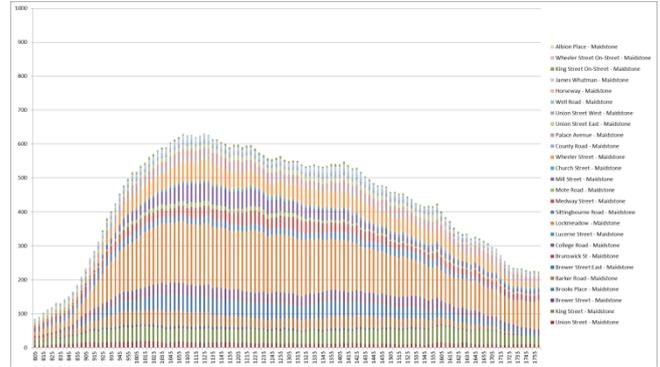
Monday (15/05/17)



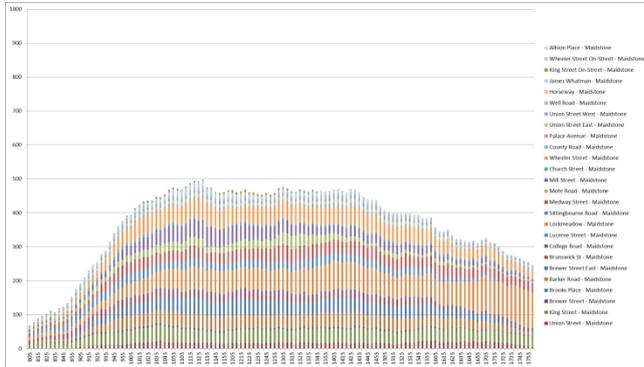
Tuesday (16/05/17)



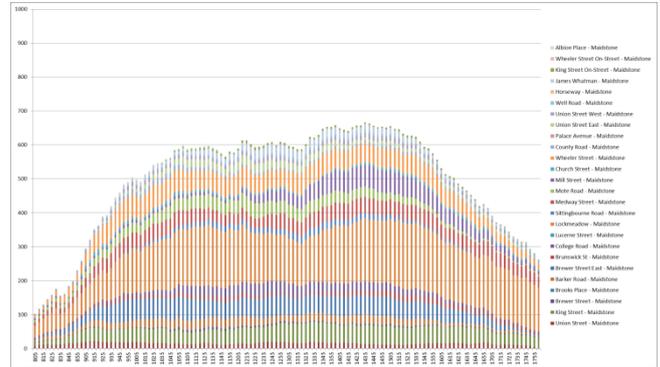
Wednesday (17/05/17)



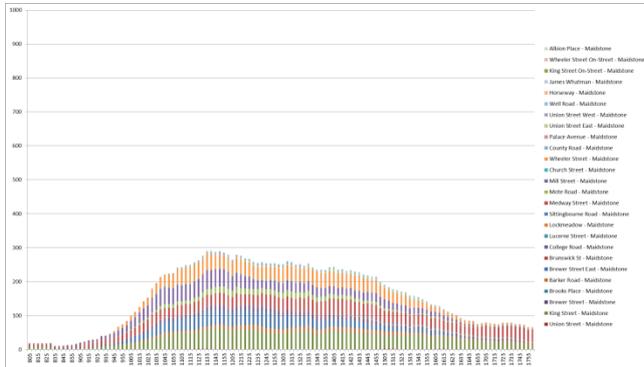
Thursday (18/05/17)



Friday (19/05/17)



Saturday (20/05/17)



Sunday (21/05/17)

Notes: Vertical axis: Car Accumulation: 0-1000
 Horizontal axis: Time: 0800-1800
 Colours represent car parks

Figure 32 – Demand Profile Across a Year for MBC Car Parks (Saturday)

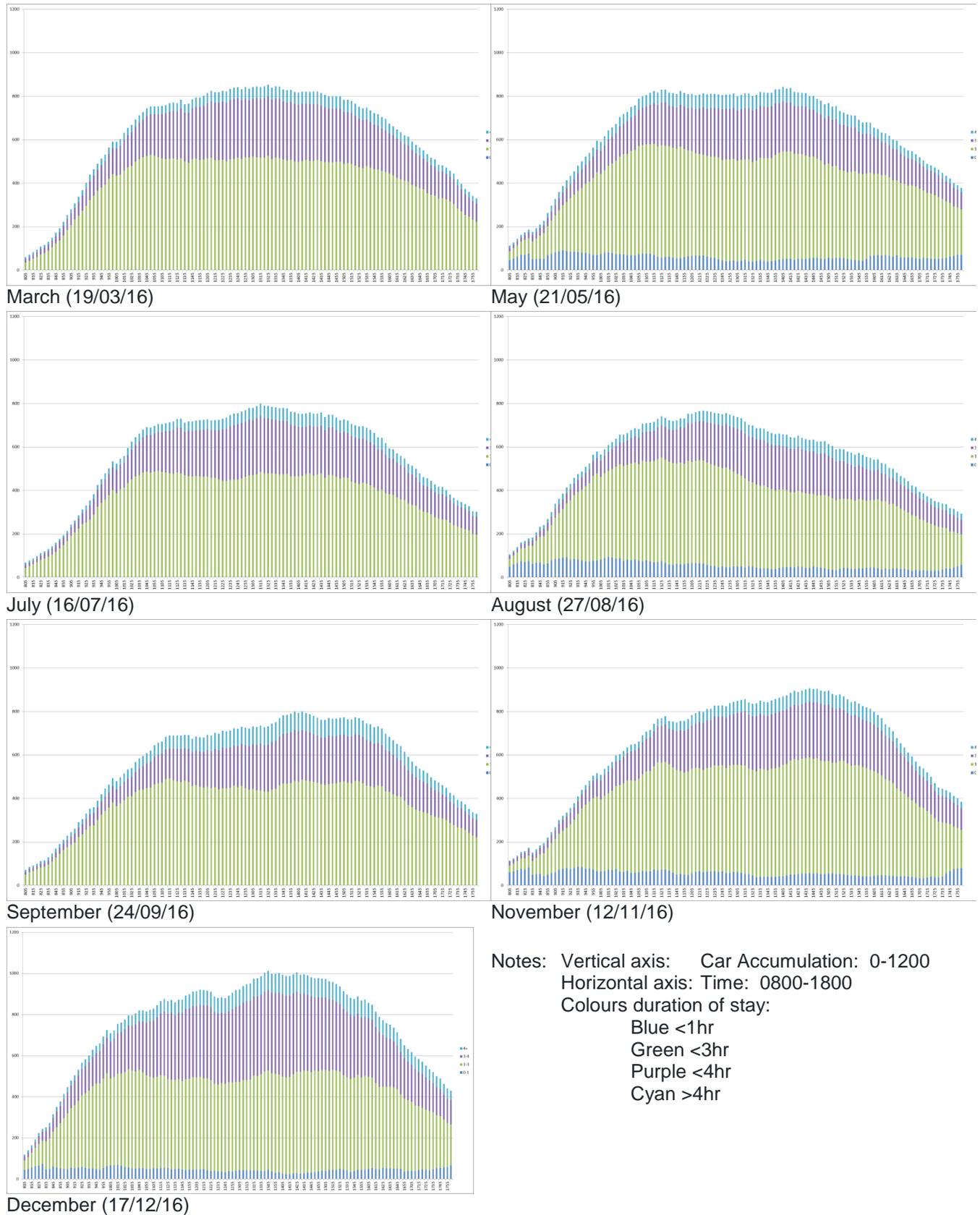


Figure 33 – Long Term Trend for MBC Car Parks, Thursday

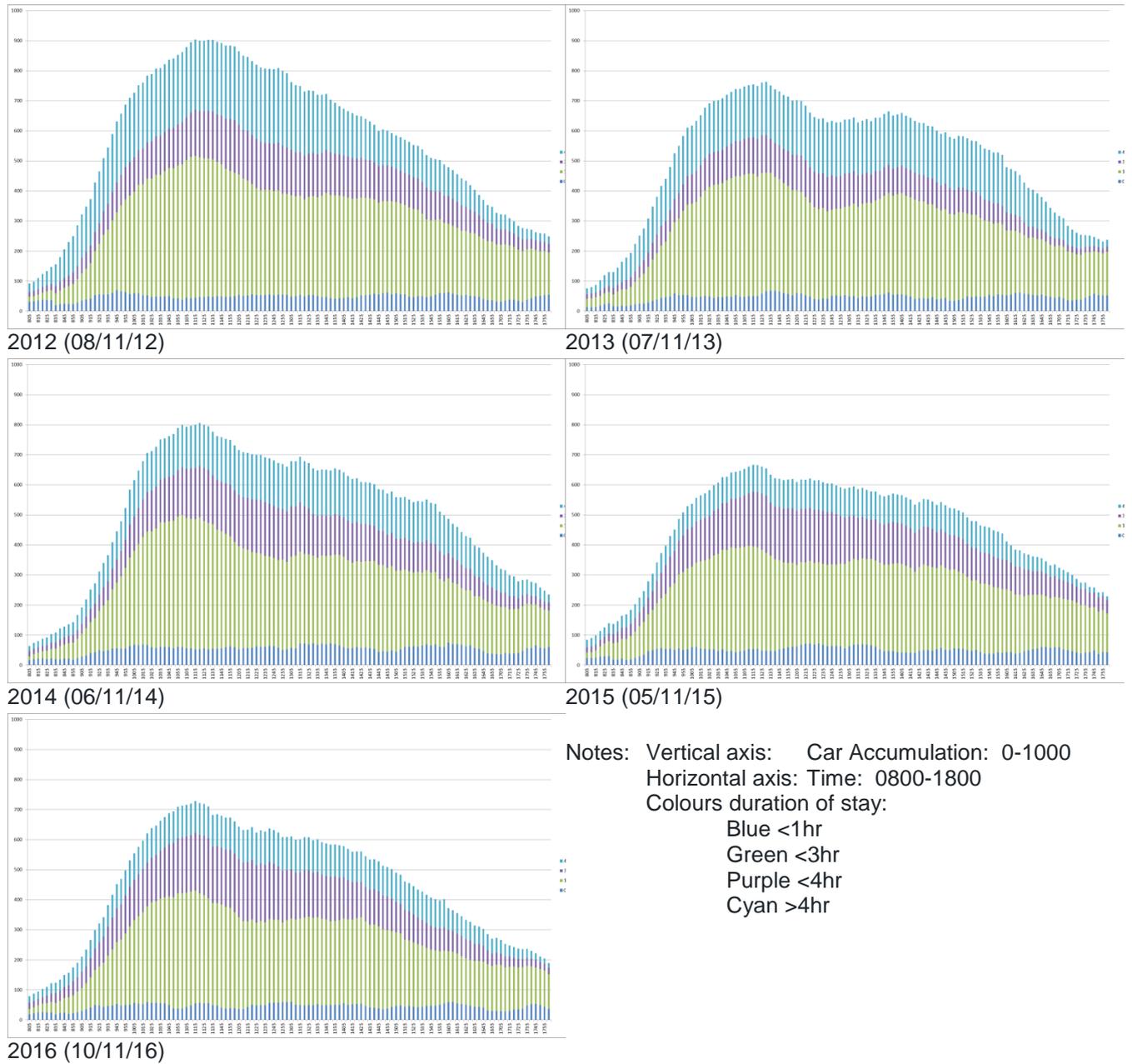
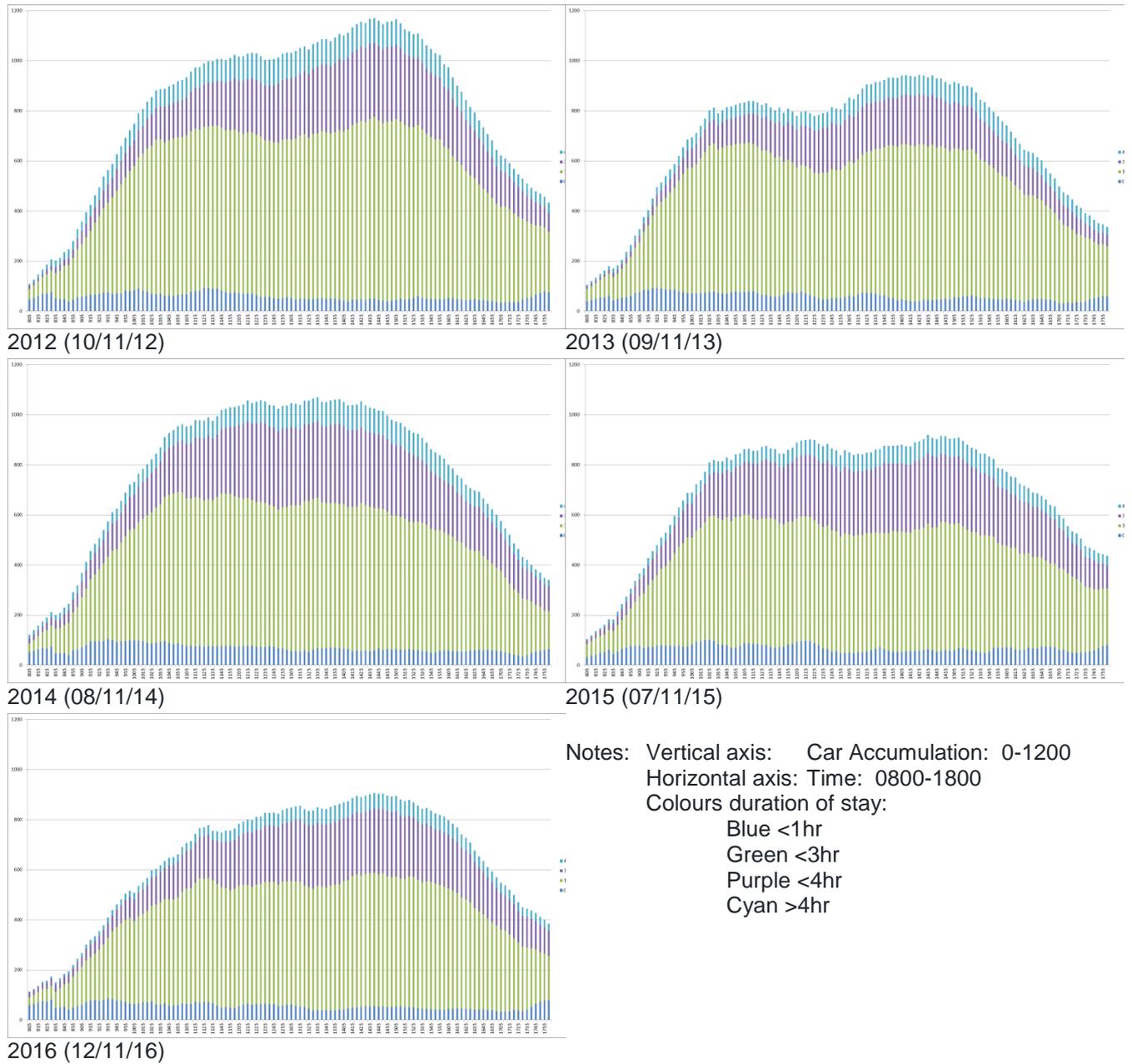


Figure 34 – Long Term Trend for MBC Car Parks, Saturday



4.11 2017 SURVEY SCOPE

4.11.1. To understand current prevailing car parking demand across the town centre, car parking surveys were undertaken on Thursday 21st and Saturday 23rd September 2017 between 0700 and 1900. The surveyed car parks make up the majority of the public car parking supply within the town centre. The scope of the survey, agreed with MBC, was as shown in Table 12.

Table 12 - Survey Specification

Survey Type	Car Park
Car Parking Occupancy	Sandling Road Invicta House (Sat/Sun) Mill Street Mote Road Sittingbourne Road Sessions House (Upper) (Sat/Sun) Sainsburys Broadway B&Q Barker Road College Road Brewer Street East Wheeler Street Brunswick St Jeffrey Street Palace Avenue Church Street County Road (On-S't) Union Street West Well Road Lower Brewer Street James Whatman (On-S't) Sessions House (Lower) (Sat/Sun) Union Street (On-S't) Church Street (On-S't) Lucerne Street Romney Place Brewer Street (On-S't) King Street On-Street (On-S't) Wheeler Street On-Street (On-S't) Brooks Place Albion Place (On-S't) Horseway (On-S't)
Car Parking Occupancy & Full Duration of Stay Profile	The Mall (Multistorey & Rooftop) Fremlin Lockmeadow King Street Medway Street Union Street East
Not Surveyed	Maidstone East (North) St Peters Wharf Wickes Hart Street Commercial Ctr Maidstone East (South) Maidstone West London Road P&R Willington Street P&R

4.12 SURVEY RESULT INTERPRETATION

4.12.1. The surveys which have been undertaken represent a snapshot of demand for car parking in neutral conditions. There is however an inherent variation in car parking demand across a day and week with a degree of randomness which becomes especially apparent when dealing with smaller sample sizes (such as when looking at individual car parks). The conditions within any one car park will vary throughout a day and across days, weeks and months as a result of this randomness. It is generally sensible to read all survey results as being within a confidence interval of c.±5-10%.

4.13 CAR PARKING CURRENT DEMAND & OCCUPANCY

4.13.1. The graphs shown in Figure 35 and Figure 36 summarise the overall demand for parking across the town centre throughout each day. These parking accumulations compare to the 4,832 and 5,179 spaces available on each of the Thursday and the Saturday respectively. This shows that the town centre was busiest on the survey days at 1115 on the Thursday at 68% of capacity and 1430 on the Saturday at 65% of capacity.

Figure 35 – Car Parking Accumulation, Thursday

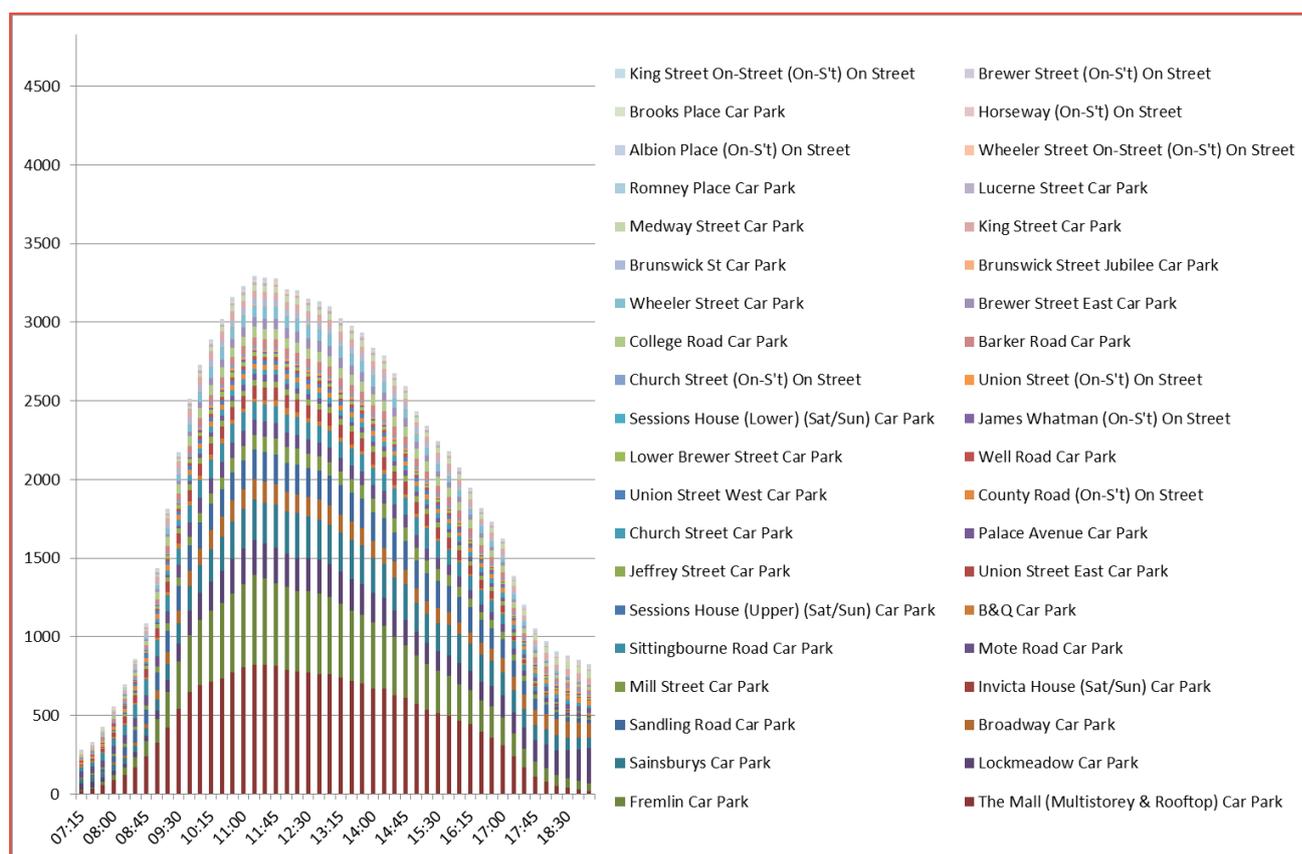
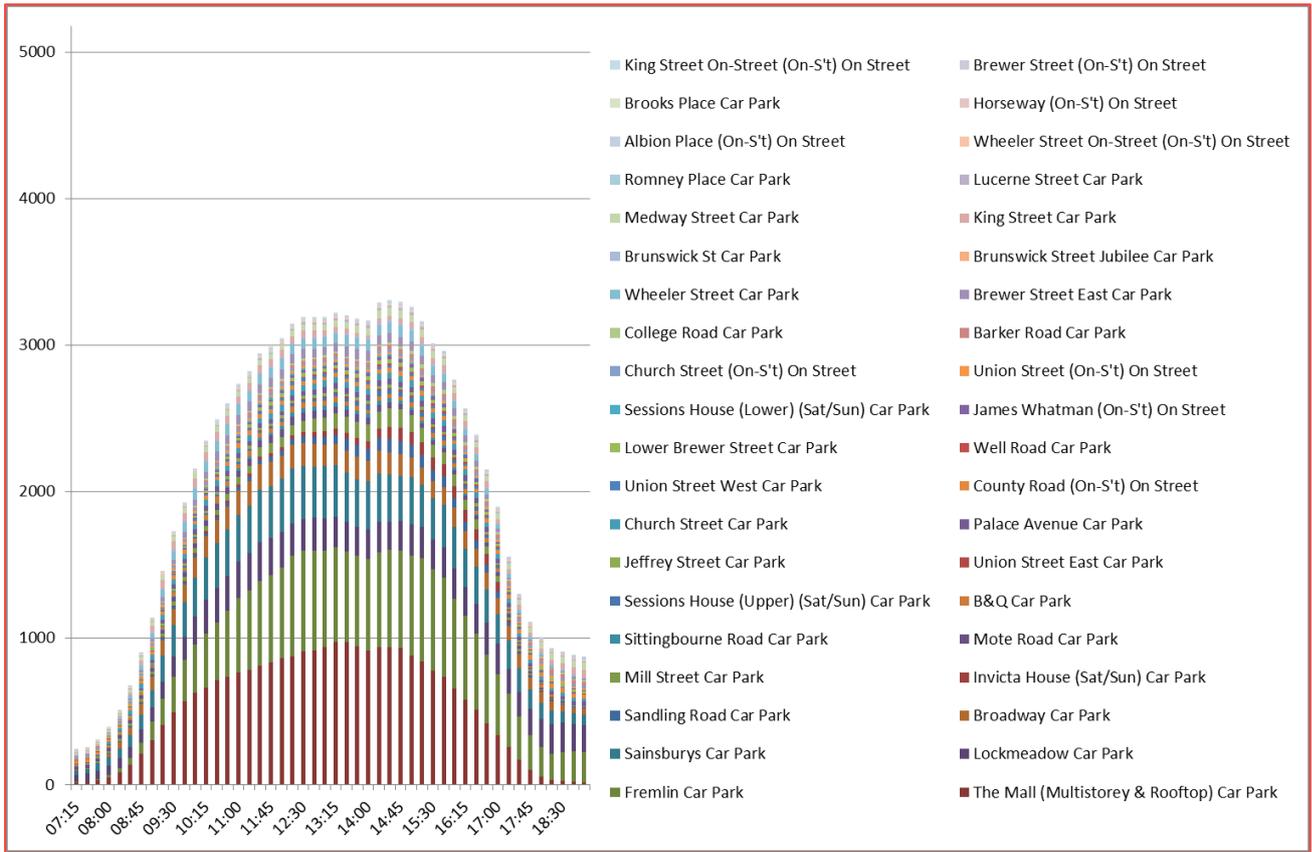


Figure 36 – Car Parking Accumulation, Saturday



4.13.2. The overall demand can be broken down by each zone in the Town Centre to understand the relative stress in each area. This is shown in Figure 37 and Figure 38.

Figure 37 – Car Parking Accumulation by Zone, Thursday

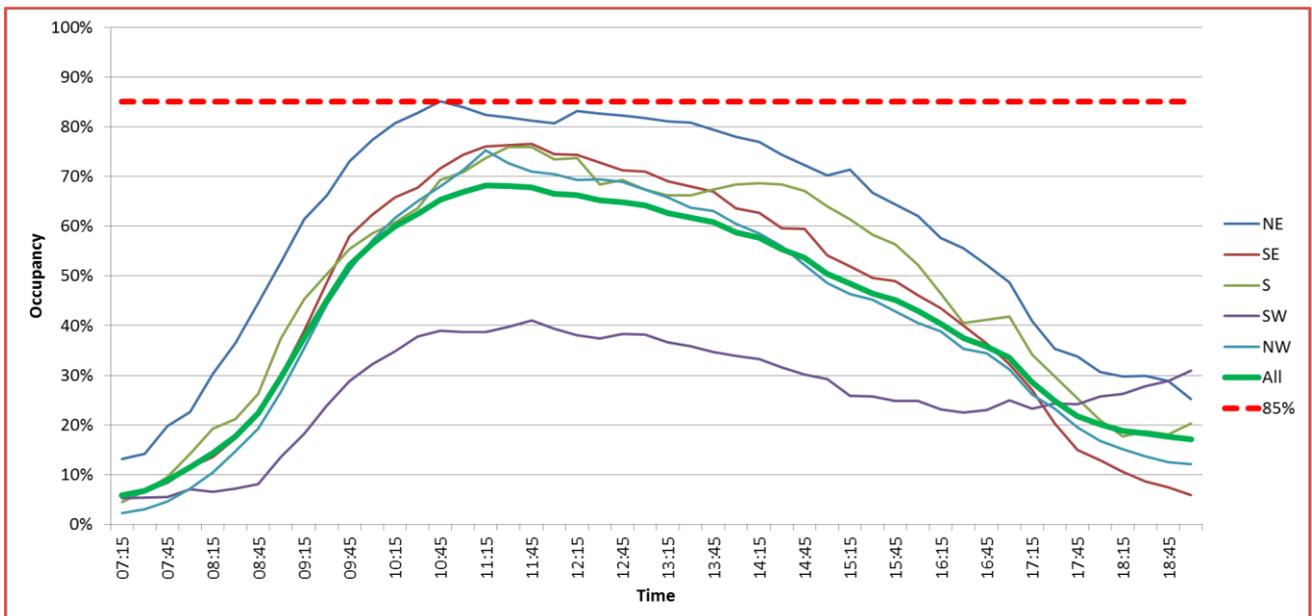
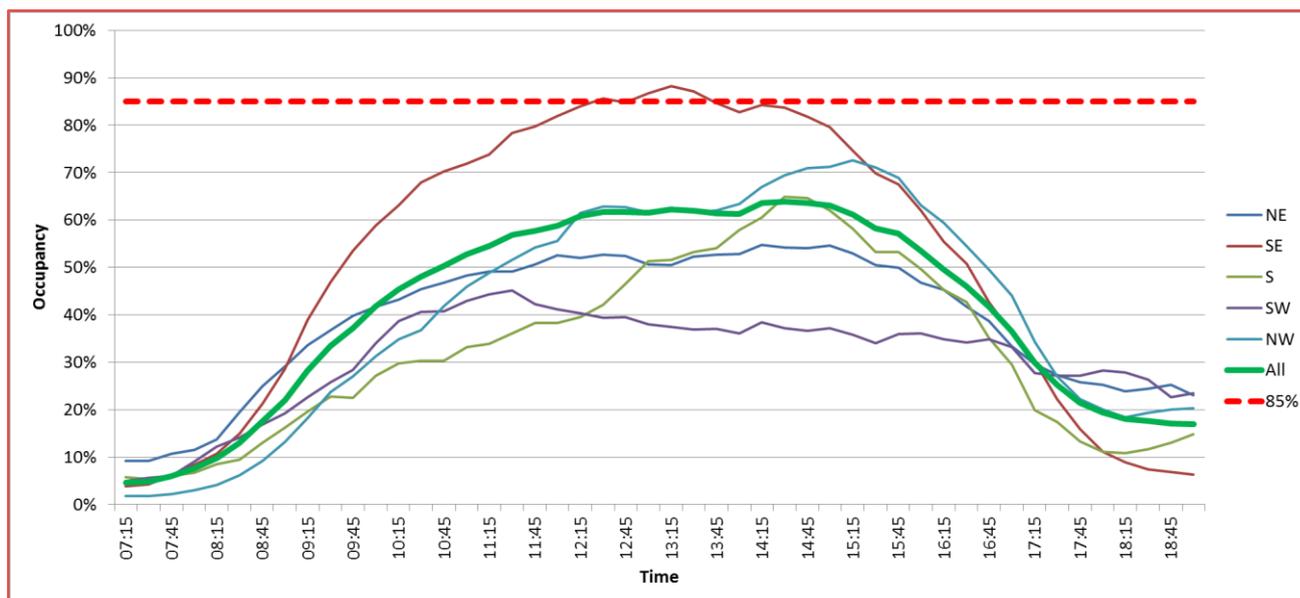


Figure 38 – Car Parking Accumulation by Zone, Saturday



4.13.3. On a Thursday, Figure 37 shows that the North East zone of the town centre operates at around 85% of capacity at peak while the South West Zone operates at only c.40% capacity at peak. On a Saturday however, Figure 38 shows the South East Zone operating at around 90% of capacity at peak with the South West operating at around 45% capacity at peak. Other zones tend to be representative of the average picture across the town centre.

4.13.4. The overall demand can also be broken down by the stay limits of car parks to understand the relative stress in each stay limit. This also, by proxy, reflects the distance from the town centre with stay limit typically increasing by distance. This is shown in Figure 39 and Figure 40.

Figure 39 – Car Parking Accumulation by Stay Limit, Thursday

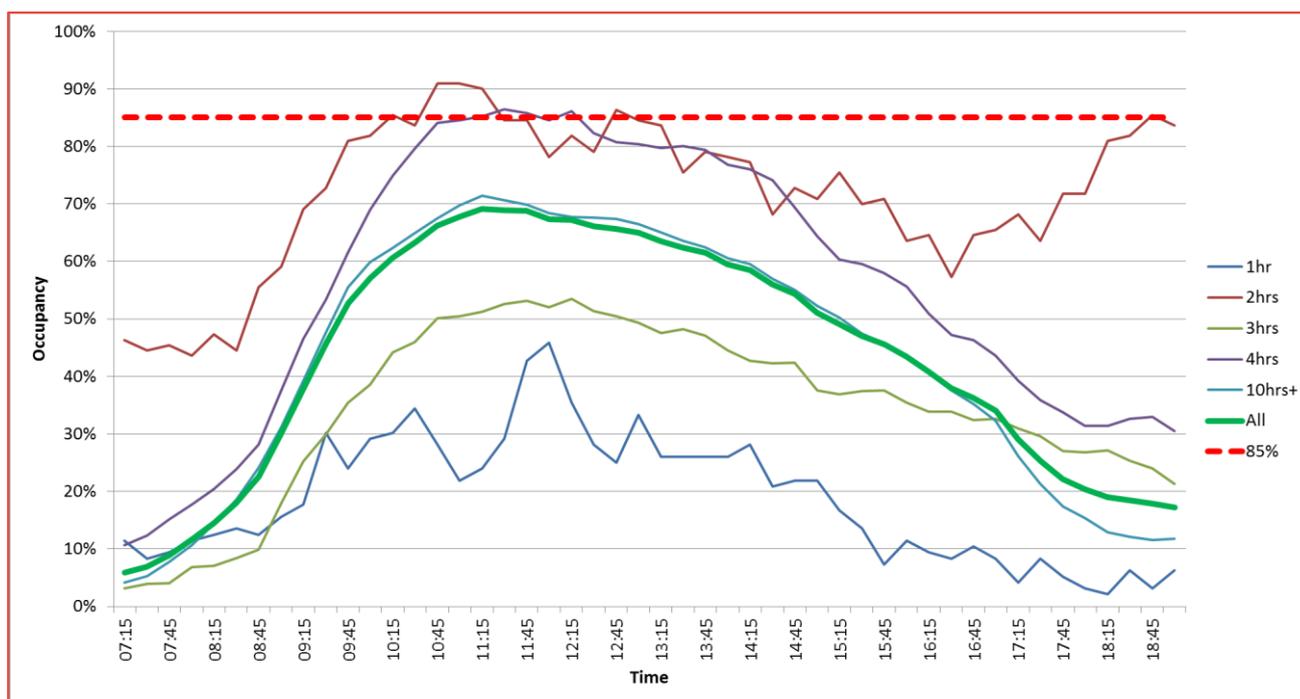
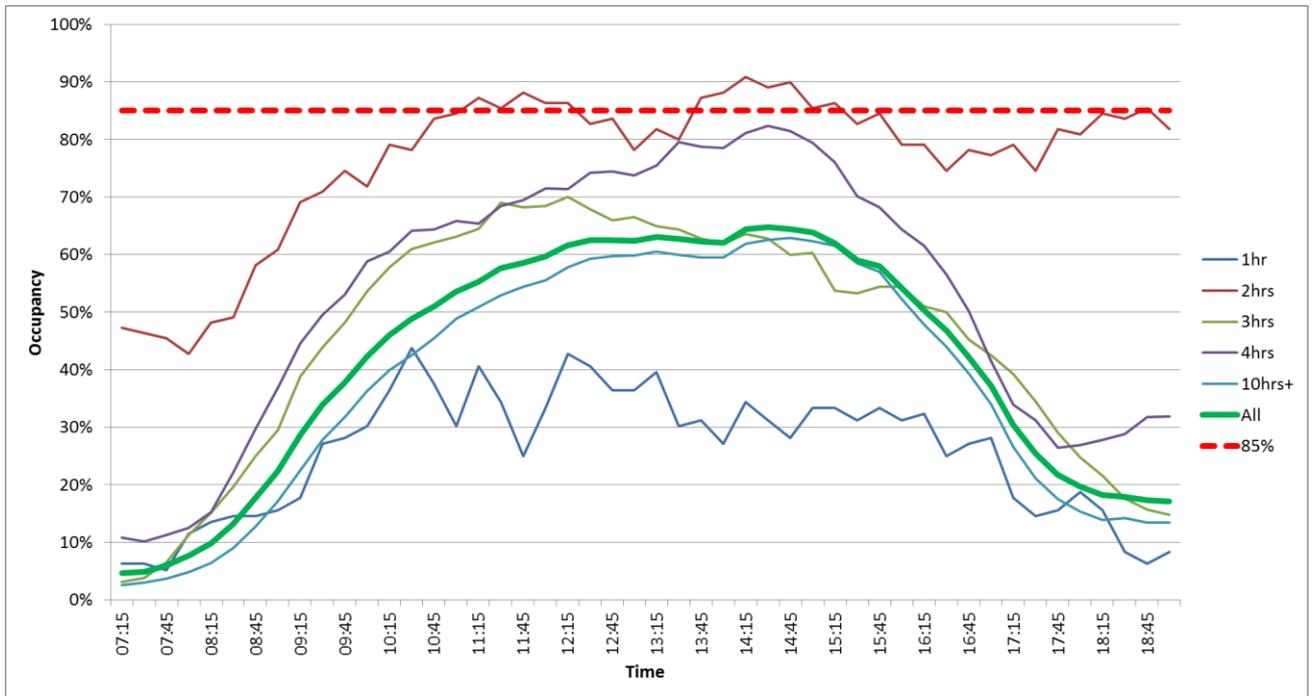


Figure 40 – Car Parking Accumulation by Stay Limit, Saturday



- 4.13.5. It is typically the shorter stay limits which are busy as would be expected with the more remote longer stay car parks generally having significant spare capacity.
- 4.13.6. The overall demand can again be broken down by the stay limits of car parks and also the operator. Figure 41 and Figure 42 show the stress in MBC car parks by stay limit.

Figure 41 – Car Parking Accumulation by Stay Limit, MBC Only, Thursday

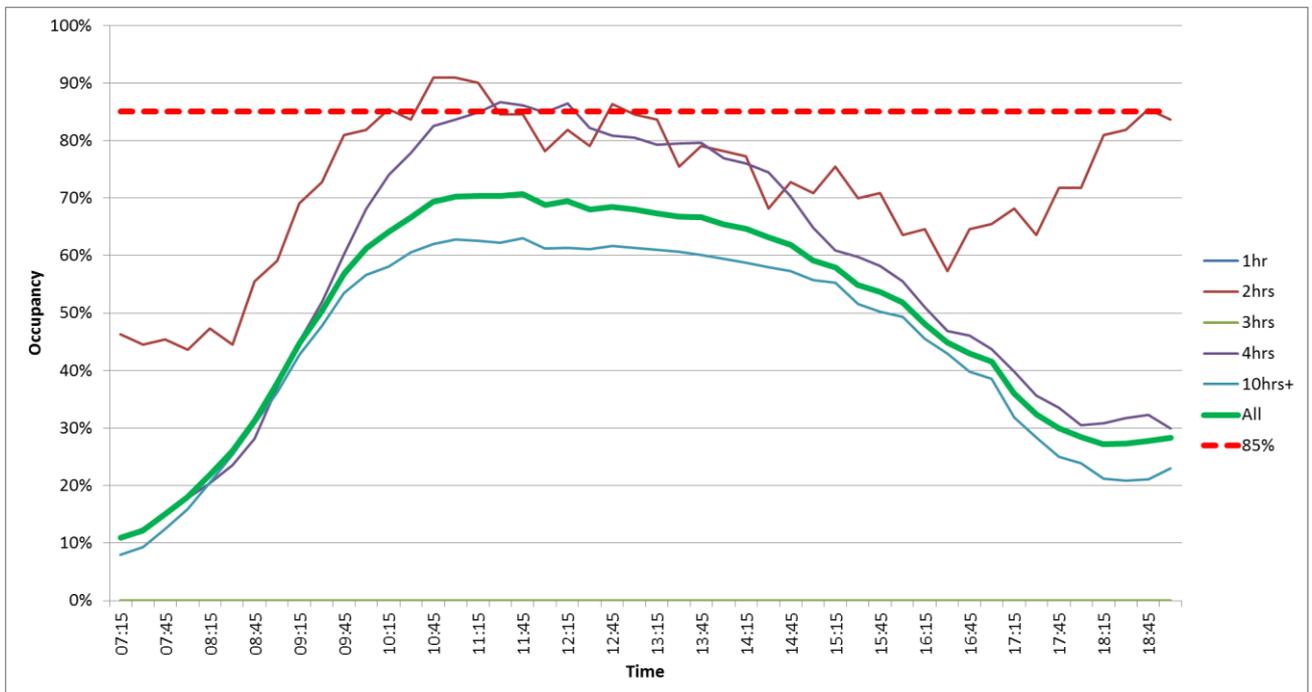
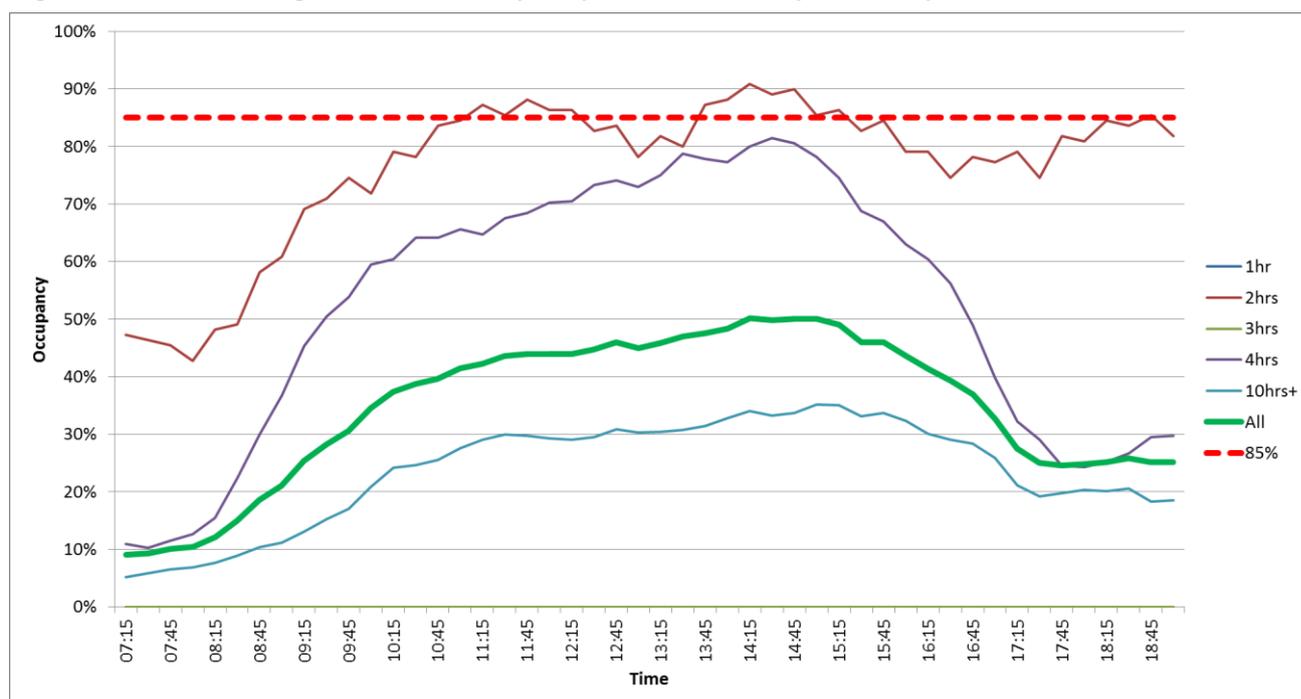


Figure 42 – Car Parking Accumulation by Stay Limit, MBC Only, Saturday



4.13.7. Figure 43 and Figure 44 show how the demand within each zone and across the town varies within each car park, as a percentage of the overall capacity of each car park, at 1115 on the Thursday and 1430 on the Saturday. This further illustrates the stress within and across each zone. In the South, South East and Eastern zones car parks are operating above an efficient occupancy of c.85% at 1115 of a Thursday. On the Saturday this stress also extends into car parks in the North West zone.

Figure 43 – Car Parking Occupancy, Thursday

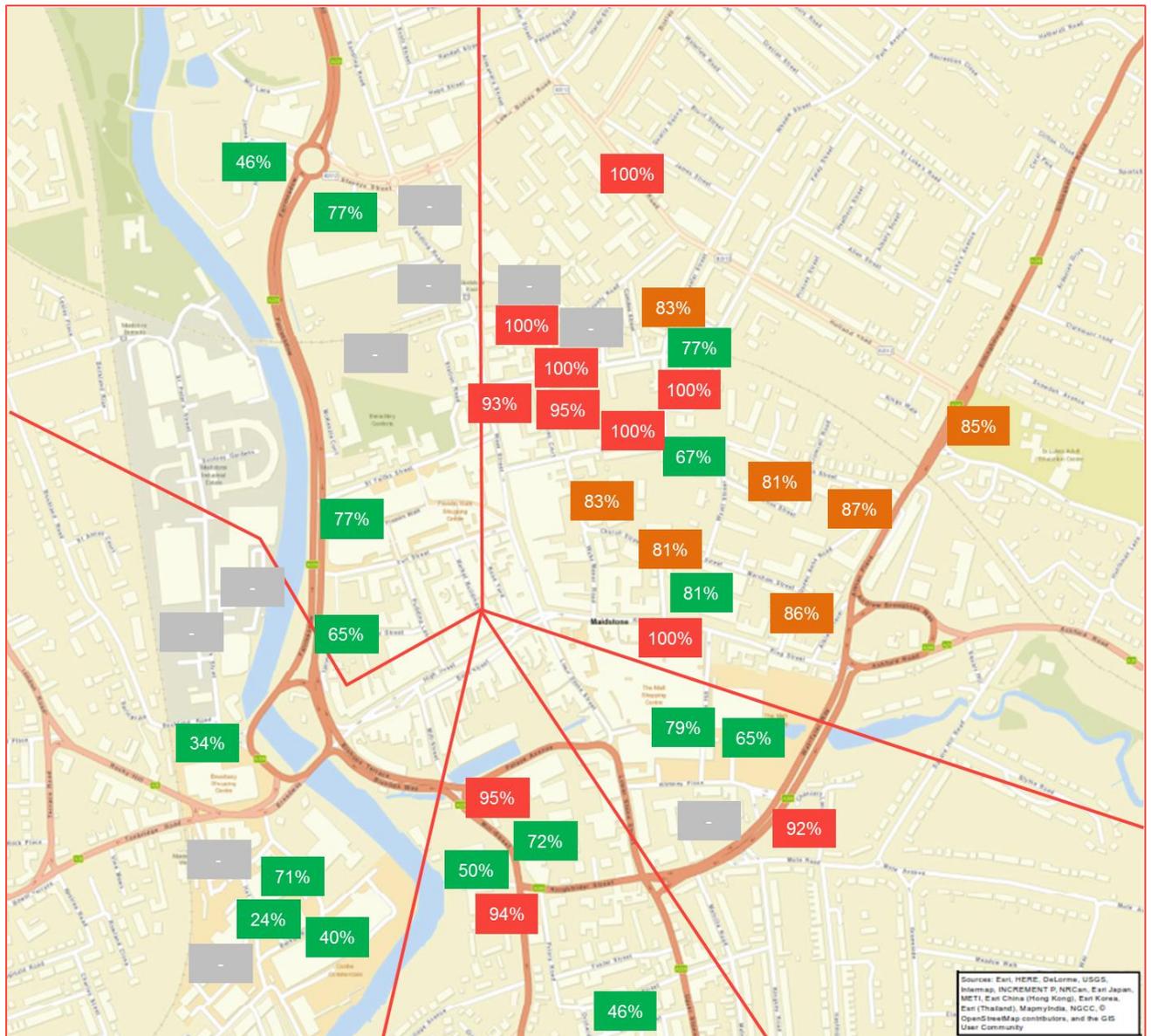
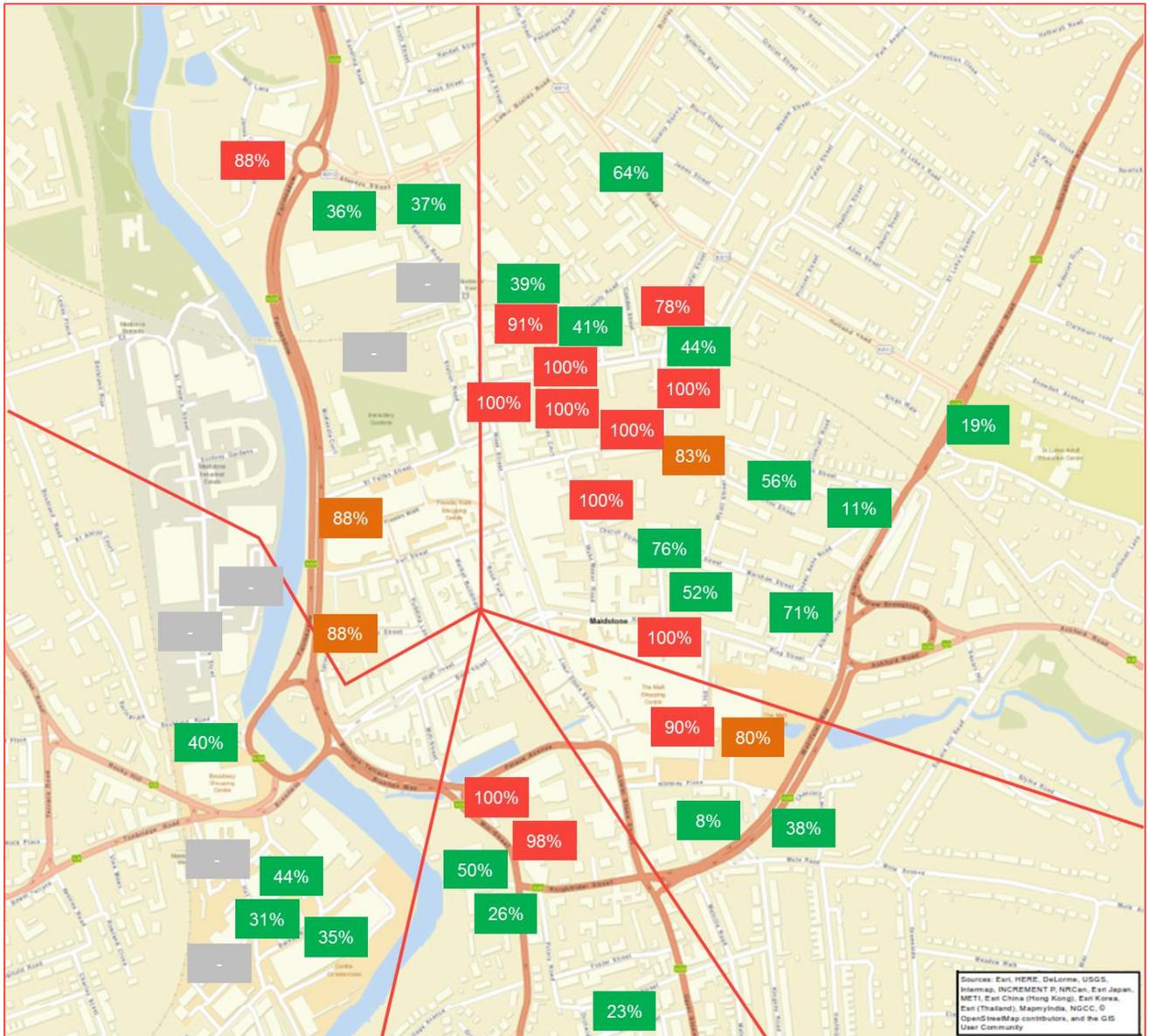
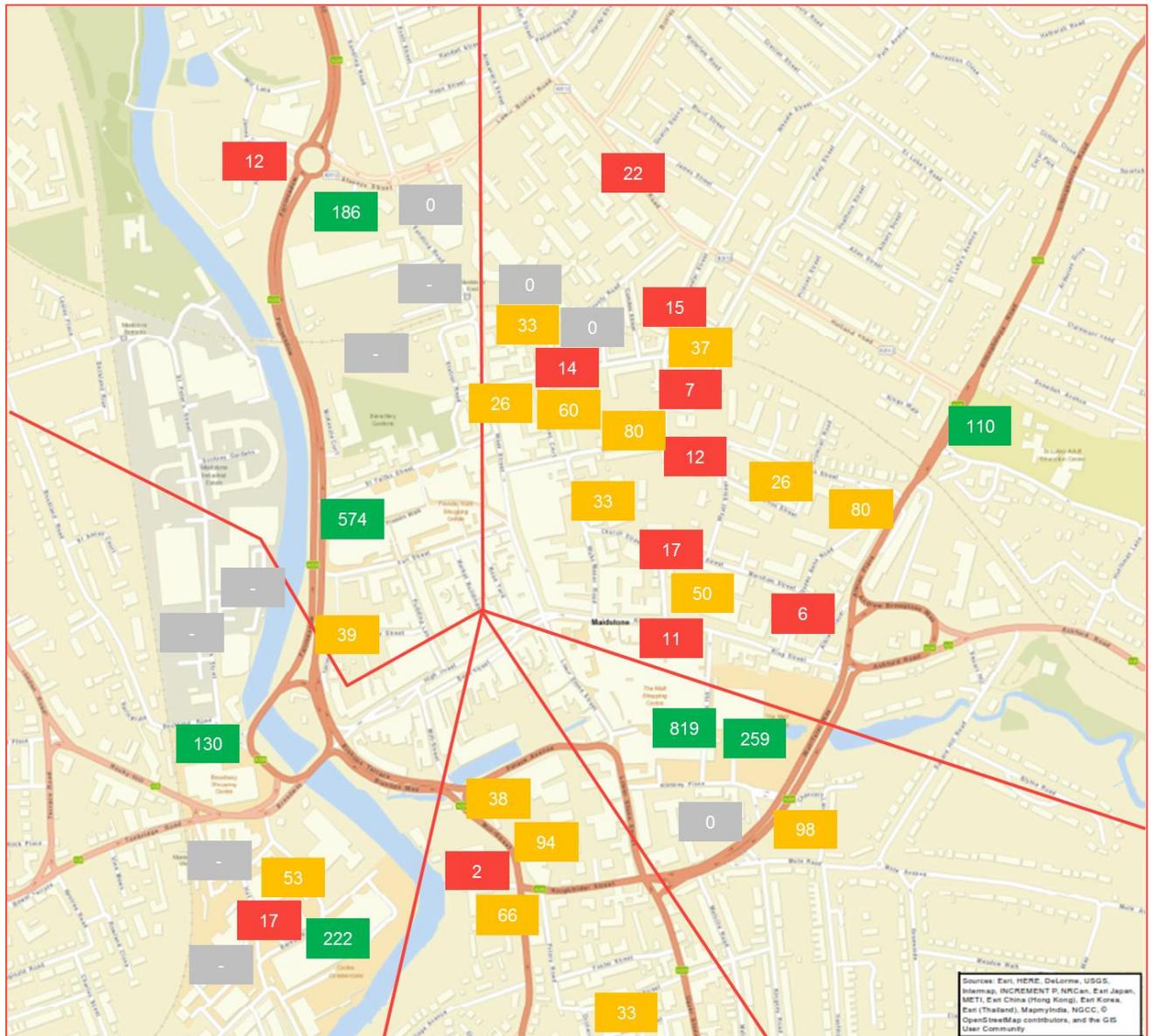


Figure 44 – Car Parking Occupancy, Saturday



4.13.8. Figure 45 and Figure 46 show the accumulation in each car park in absolute terms at 1115 on the Thursday and 1430 on the Saturday.

Figure 45 – Car Parking Accumulation, Thursday



4.13.9. Figure 47 and Figure 48 show the spaces which remain empty in each car park in absolute terms at 1115 on the Thursday and 1430 on the Saturday.

Figure 47 – Car Parking Empty Spaces, Thursday

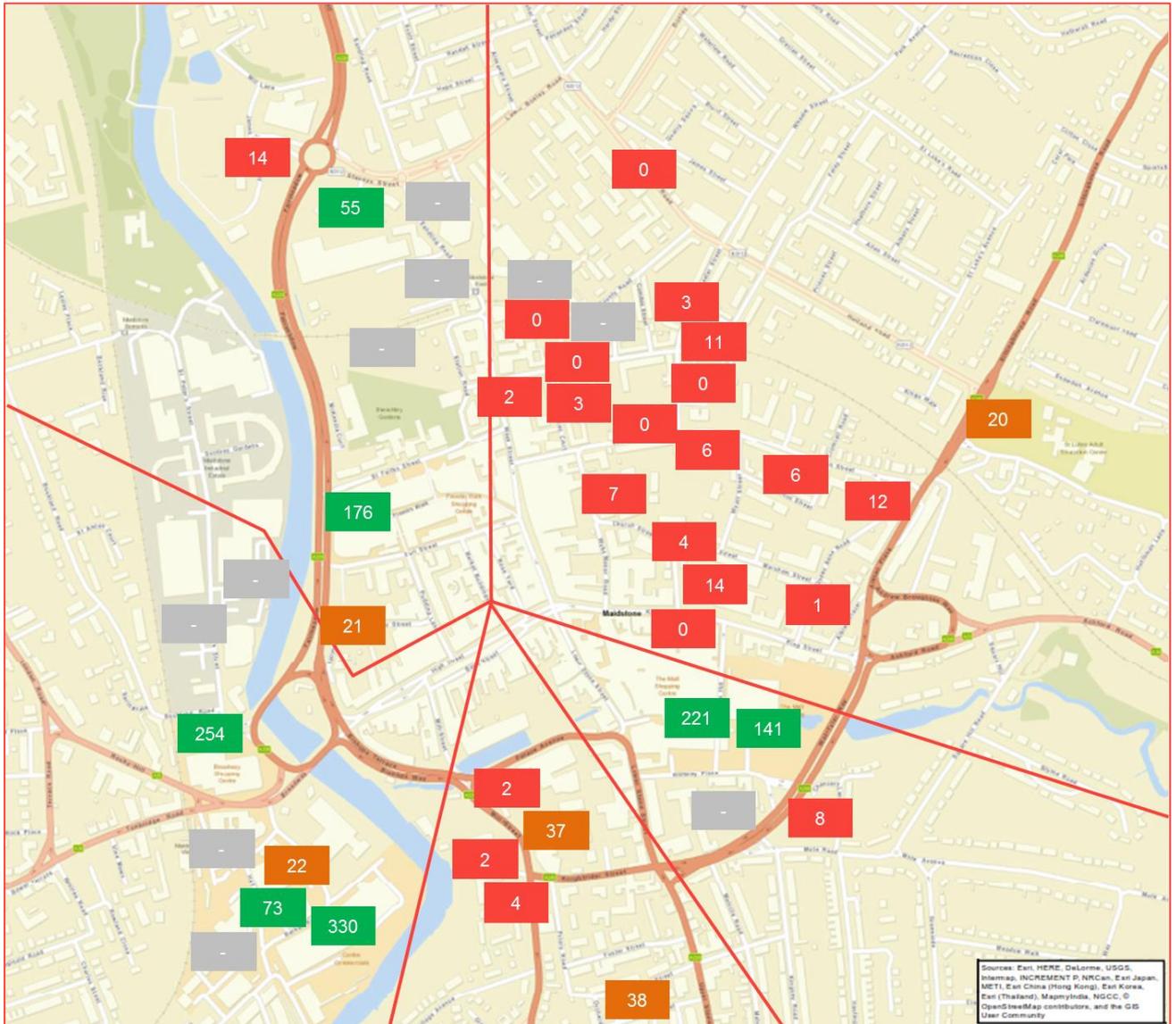
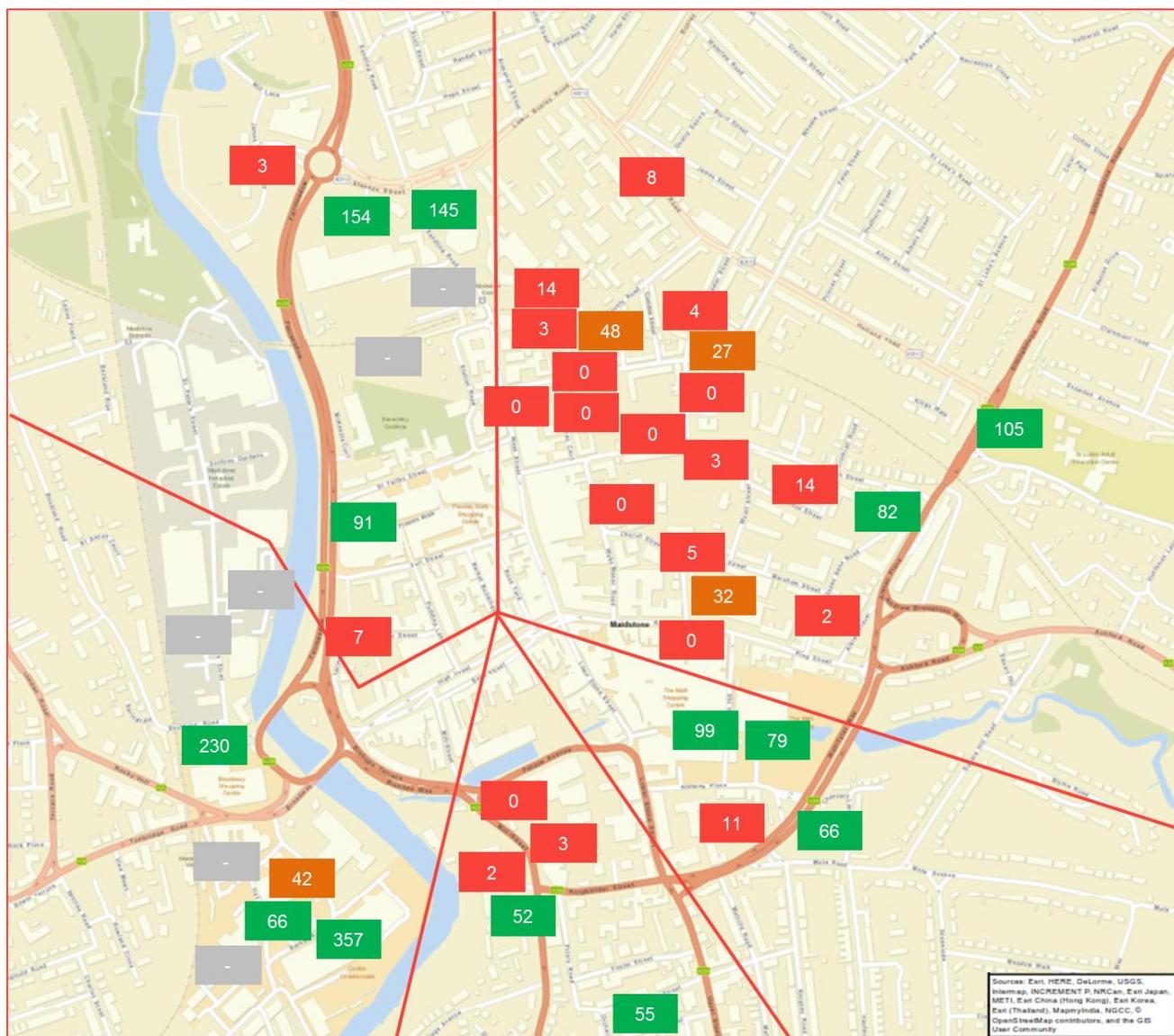


Figure 48 – Car Parking Empty Spaces, Saturday



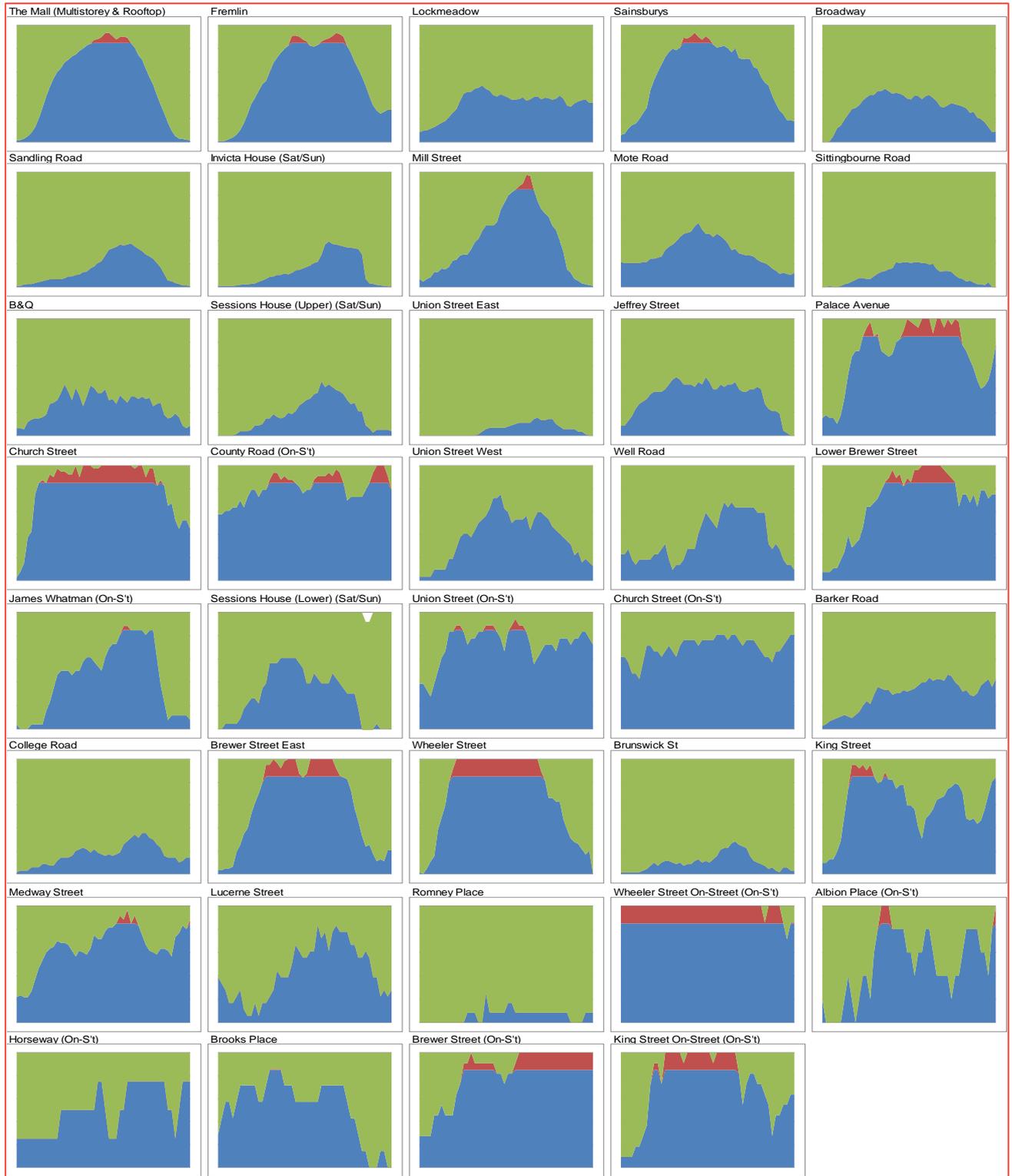
4.13.10. The combination of Figure 43 and Figure 44, Figure 45 and Figure 46 with Figure 47 and Figure 48 shows clearly where car parks are most stressed, in most cases because the car parks in question are quite small.

4.13.11. Each car park has its own unique demand profile. Figure 49 and Figure 50 shows the demand variation within each car park across each day.

Figure 49 – Car Parking Occupancy, Thursday



Figure 50 – Car Parking Occupancy, Saturday



4.13.12. Figure 49 and Figure 50 show that some car parks tend to be bust throughout the day while others tend to peak for only a short time.

4.13.13. Figure 51 and Figure 52 show the peak accumulation within each car park on Thursday and Saturday respectively which emphasises the relative importance of each car park to the overall own centre supply.

Figure 51 – Car Parking Peak Accumulation, Thursday

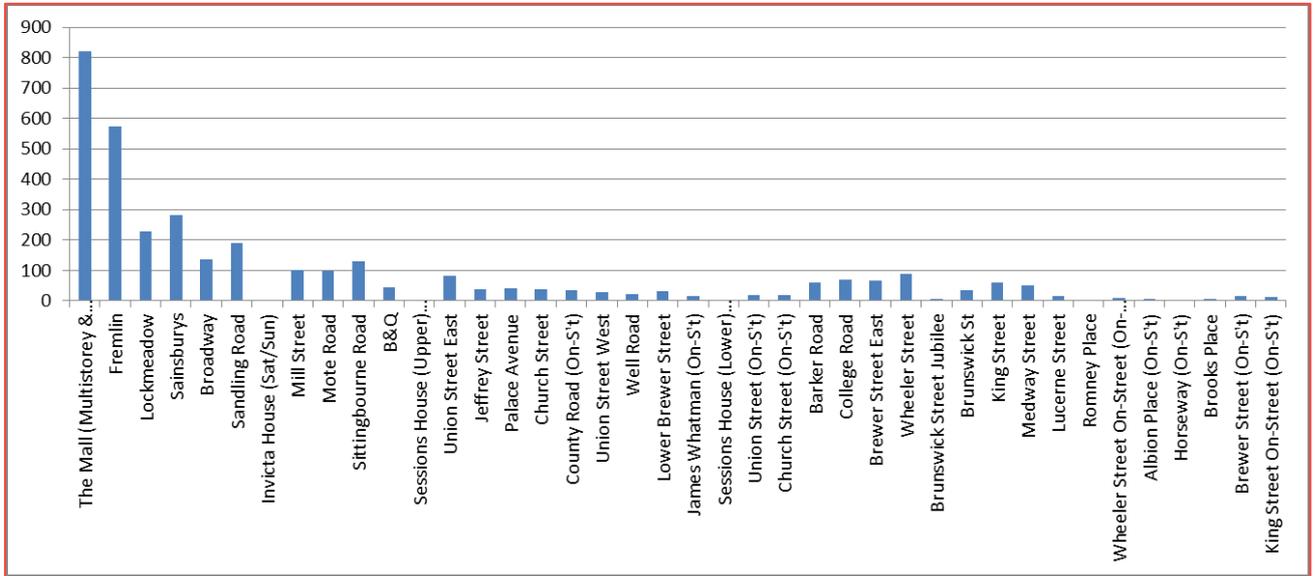
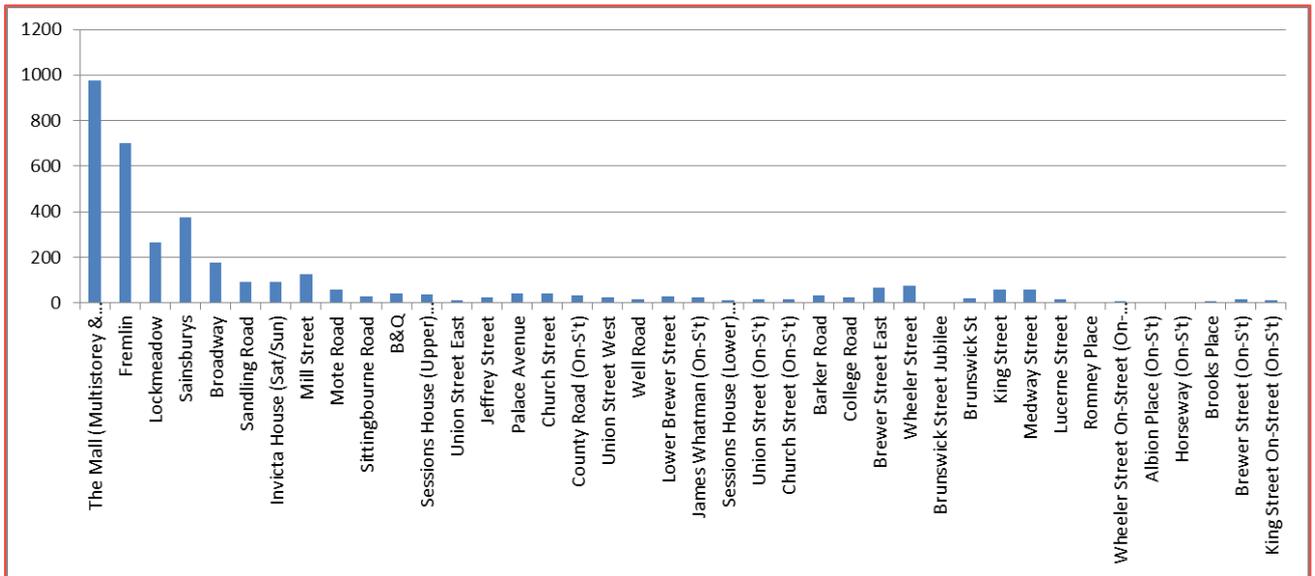


Figure 52 – Car Parking Peak Accumulation, Saturday



4.13.14. Figure 53 and Figure 54 show the total number of vehicles arriving at each park across the 0700-1900 period on Thursday and Saturday respectively. This further emphasises the relative importance of each car park to the overall supply and in particular with comparison to Figure 51 and Figure 52.

Figure 53 – Car Park Arrivals, Thursday

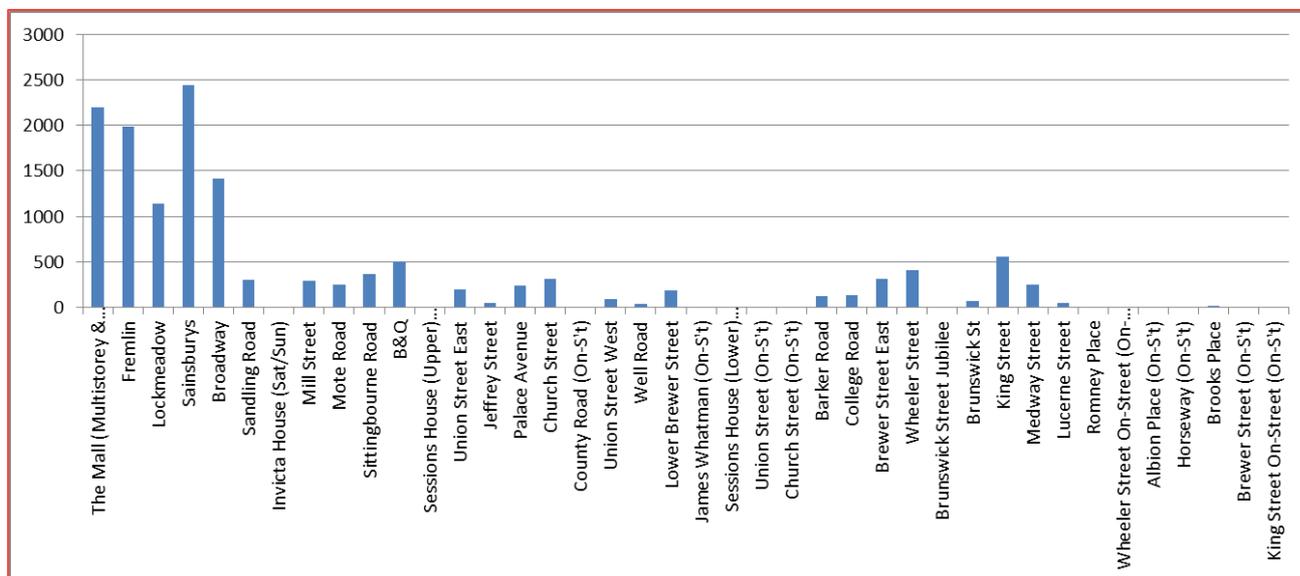
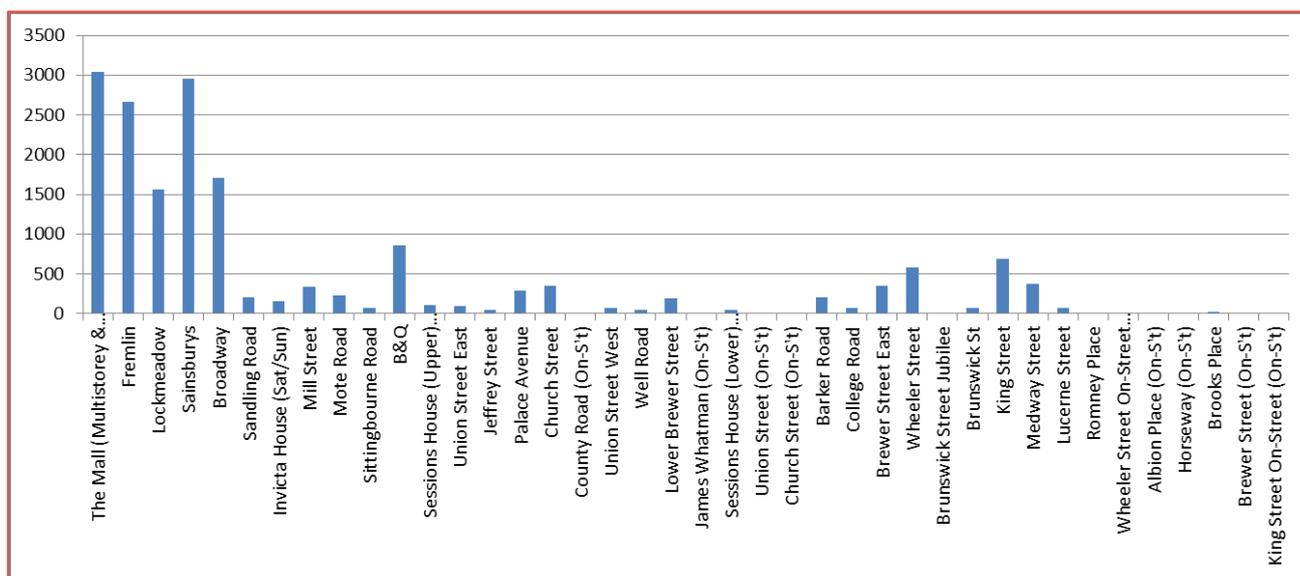


Figure 54 – Car Park Arrivals, Saturday



4.13.15. Comparing Figure 54 with Figure 52 shows the relative importance of Sainsbury’s for example for journeys to the town centre (principally to Sainsbury’s) accommodating the most vehicles across the day although the accumulation at any one time is modest compared with Fremlin and The Mall.

4.14 CAR PARKING DURATION OF STAY

4.14.1. Figure 55 and Figure 56 show the average duration of stay of a vehicle parked in each car park in each zone across the town centre. This largely reflects the stay limits.

Figure 55 – Car Parking Duration of Stay, Thursday

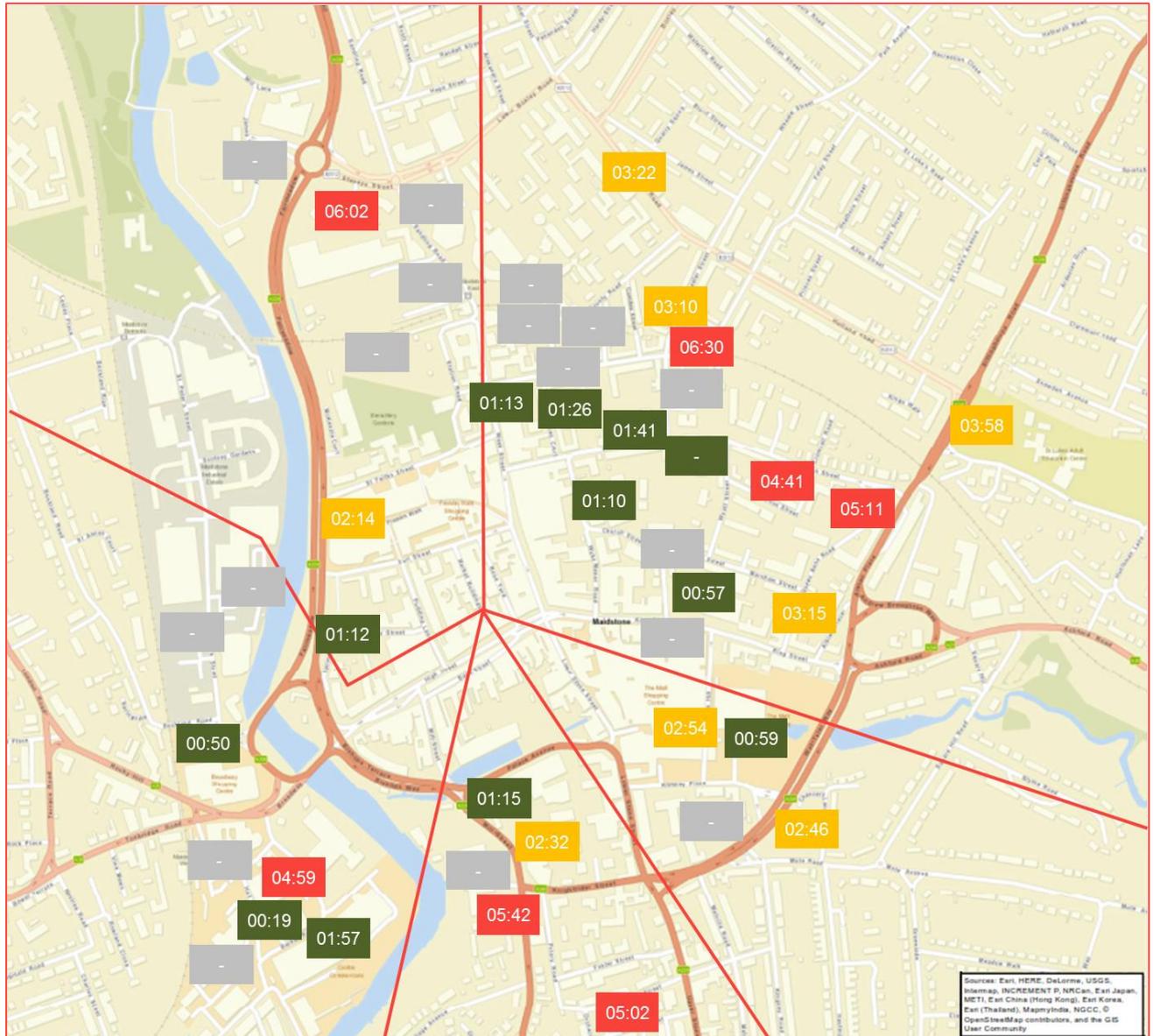
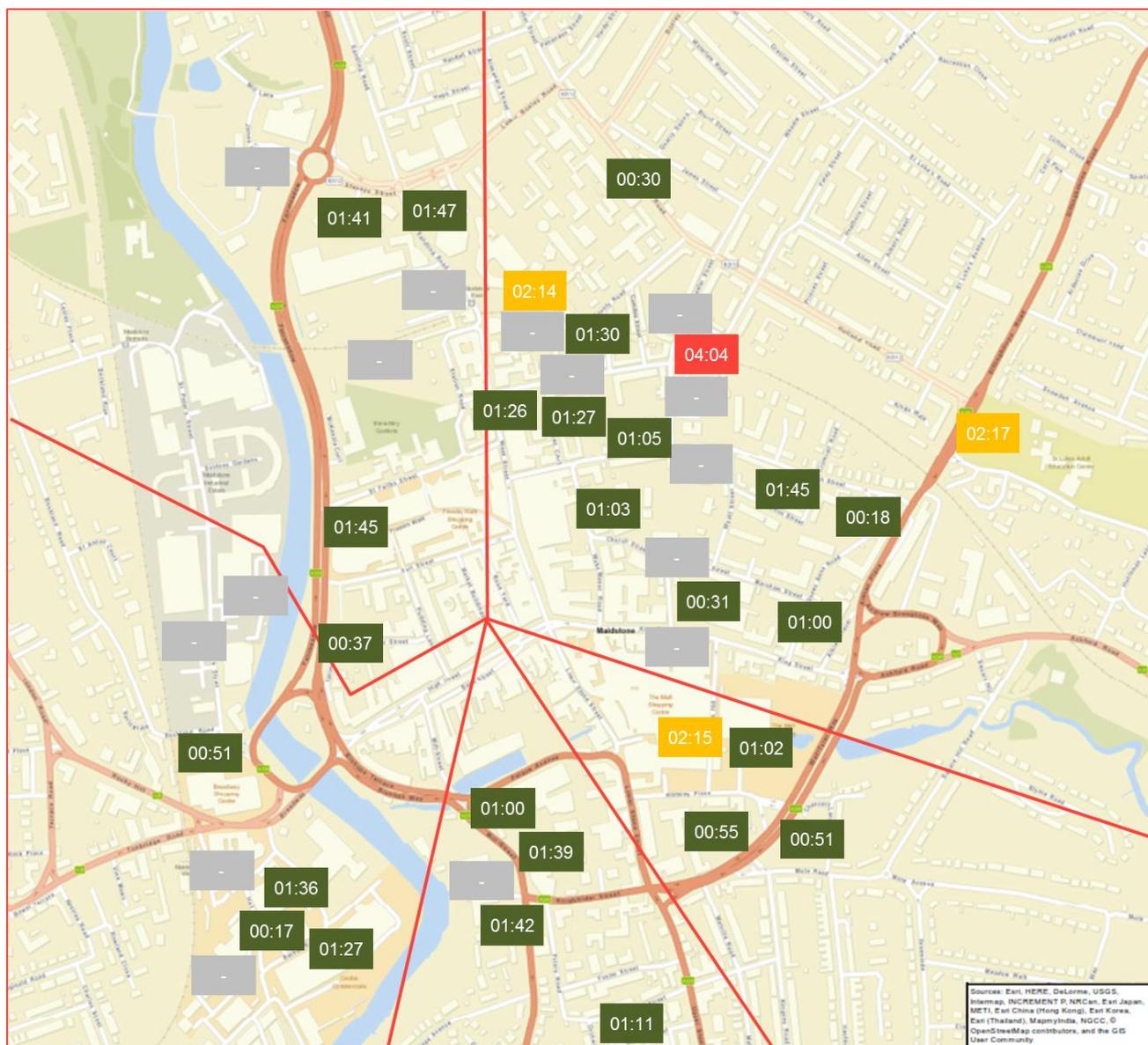


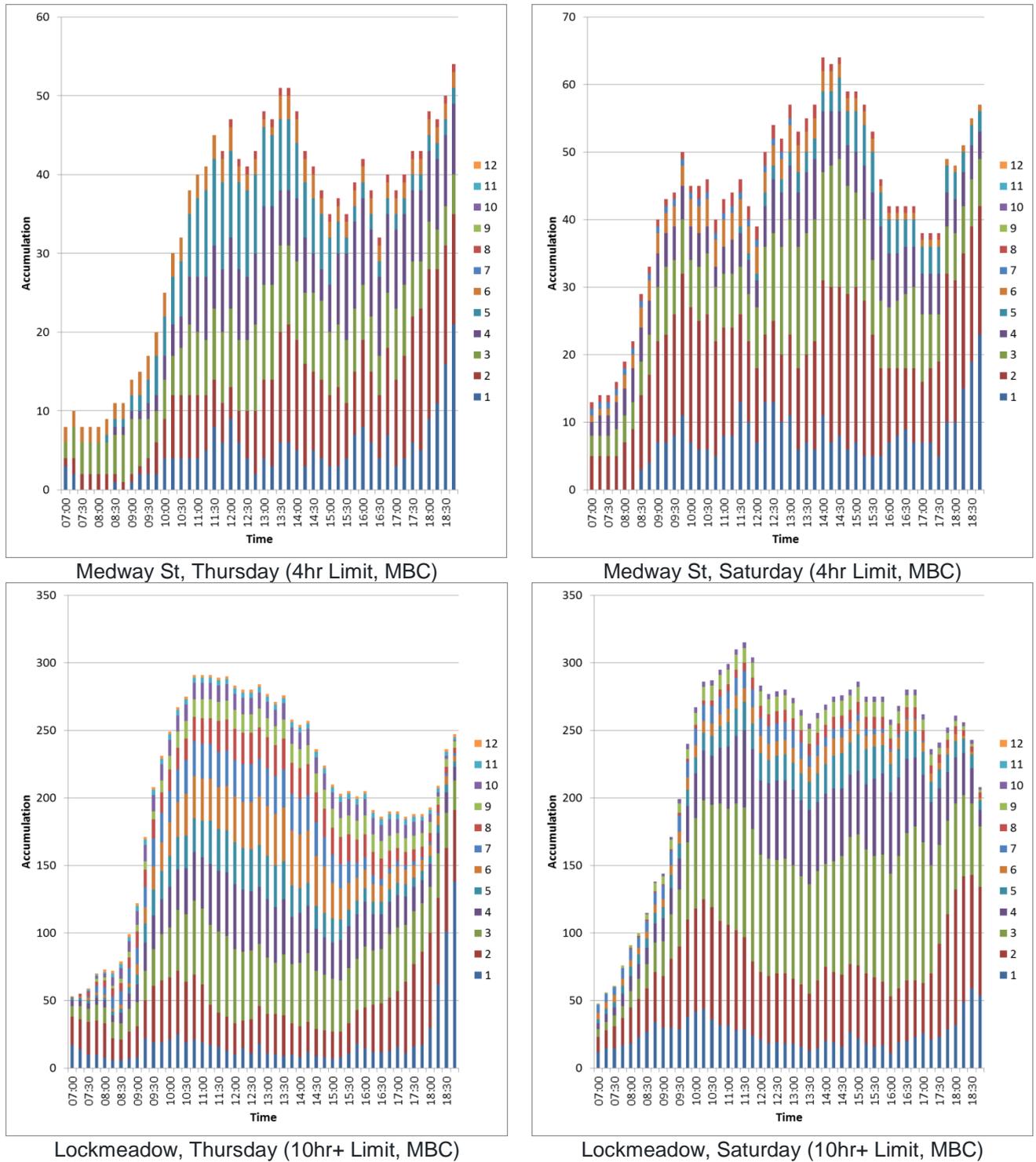
Figure 56 – Car Parking Duration of Stay, Saturday

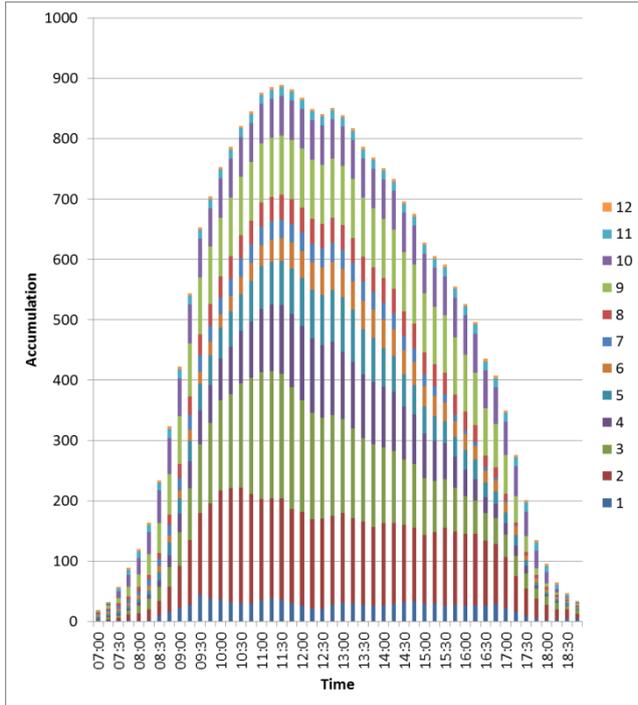


4.14.2. The much reduced average duration of stay in Figure 56 compared with Figure 55 demonstrates the current use of the outer car parks for 'weekday economy' employee and commuter parking. Retail employee parking would be present on both the weekday and the Saturday but the generally low average duration of stay on the Saturday indicates very little town centre employee parking is associated with retail.

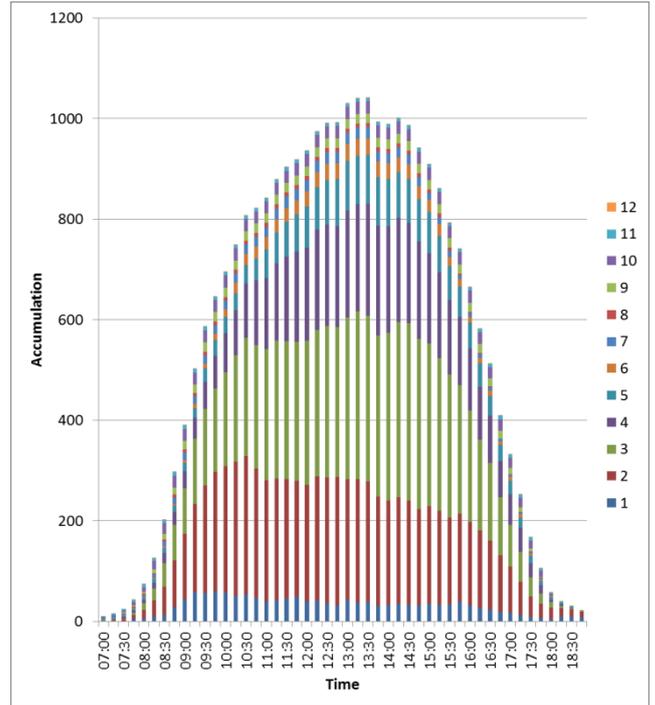
4.14.3. Detailed duration of stay data was collected for a sample of car parks and is presented in Figure 57.

Figure 57 – Car Parking Duration of Stay Detailed Profiles

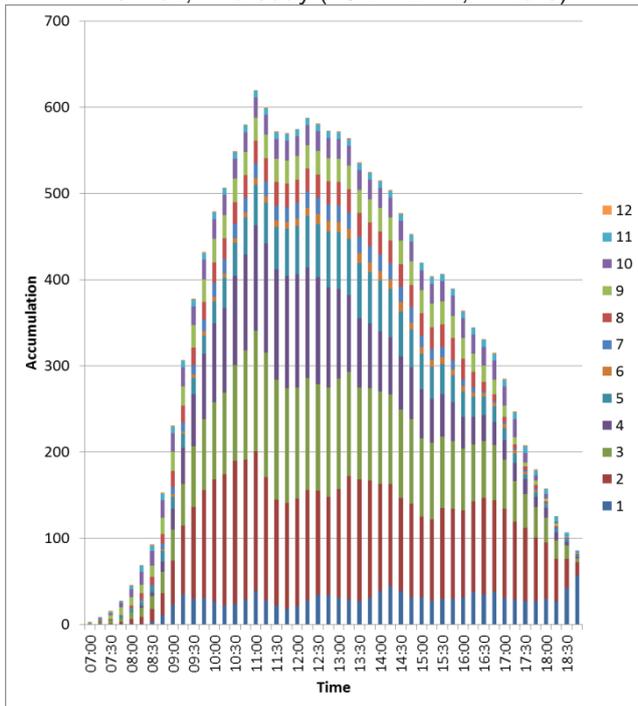




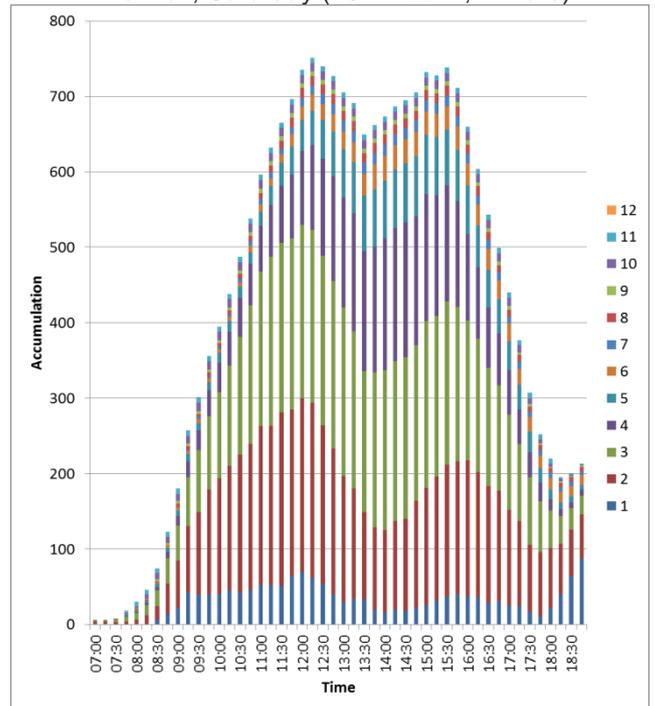
The Mall, Thursday (10hr+ Limit, Private)



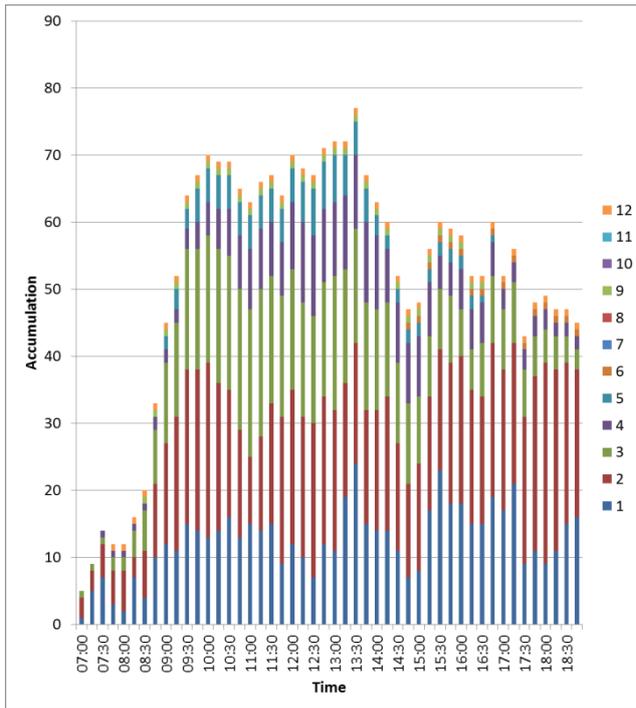
The Mall, Saturday (10hr+ Limit, Private)



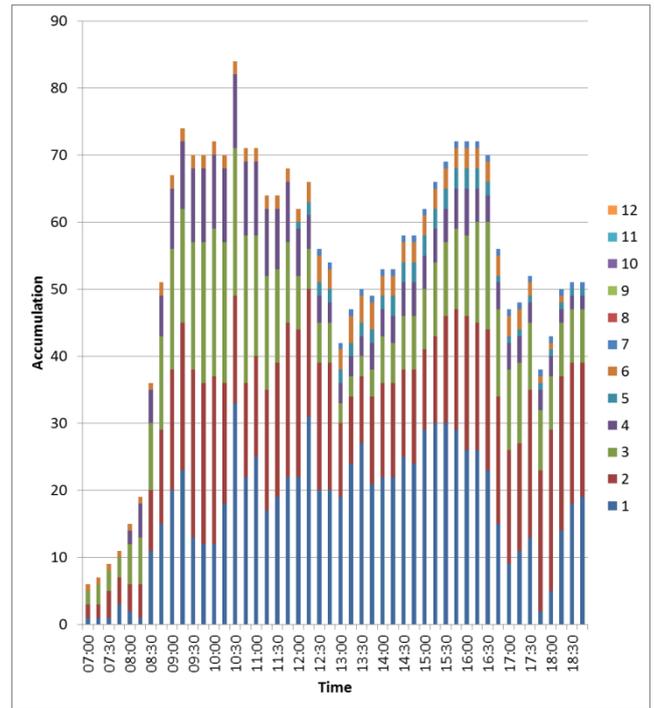
Fremlin, Thursday (10hr+ Limit, Private)



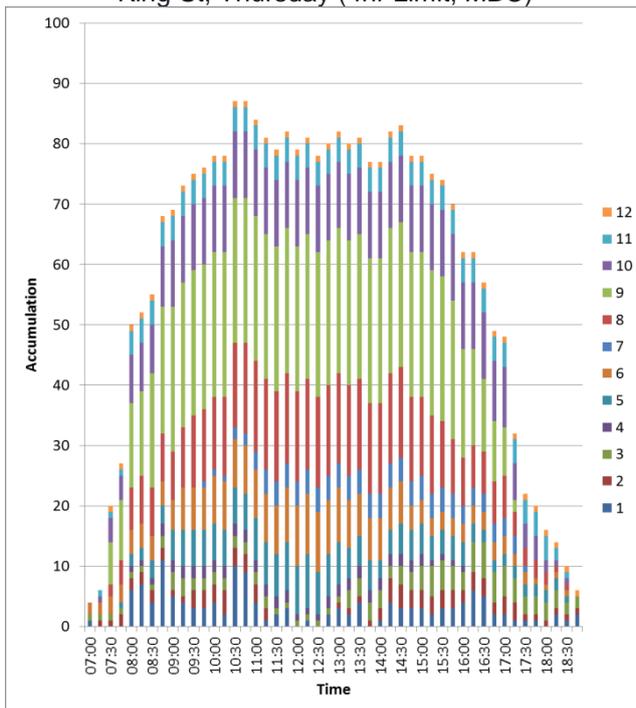
Fremlin, Saturday (10hr+ Limit, Private)



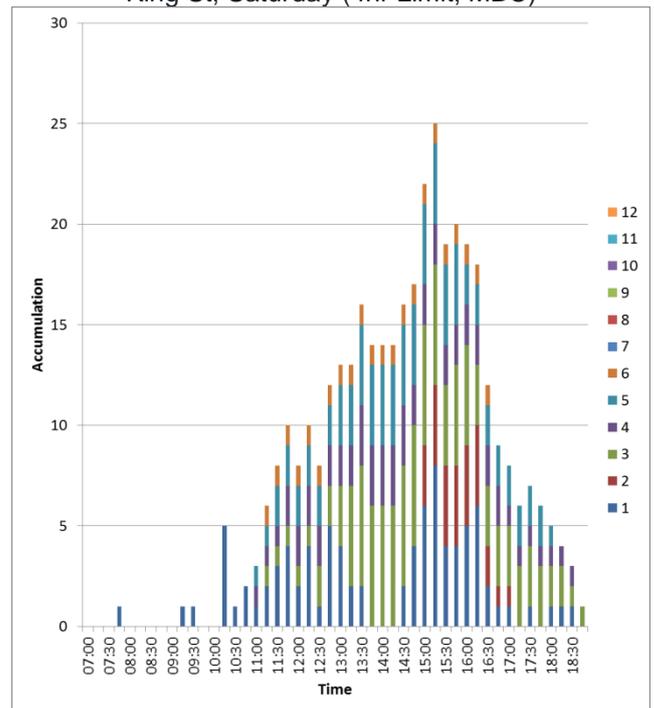
King St, Thursday (4hr Limit, MBC)



King St, Saturday (4hr Limit, MBC)



Union St, Thursday (10hr+ Limit, MBC)



Union St, Saturday (10hr+ Limit, MBC)

4.14.4. Figure 57 shows that many of the car parks are being used to accommodate a balanced spread of durations of stay (up to 1hr, up to 2hrs, up to 3hr etc). This again highlights the usage of the slightly more remote car parks for longer stay with Lockmeadow and, in particular, Union Street accommodating a great deal of long stay parking. That is through a small number of cars across the day. This highlights the potential to manage the demand in busier stock by reducing stay limits; reducing stay limits from 4hrs to 3hrs or 2hrs for example could free up space in the busier central car parks for shorter duration visits.

4.14.5. Figure 58 and Figure 59 also show the average duration of stay of a vehicle parked in each car park across the town centre. Note this data is not available for on street car parks.

Figure 58 – Car Parking Duration of Stay, Thursday

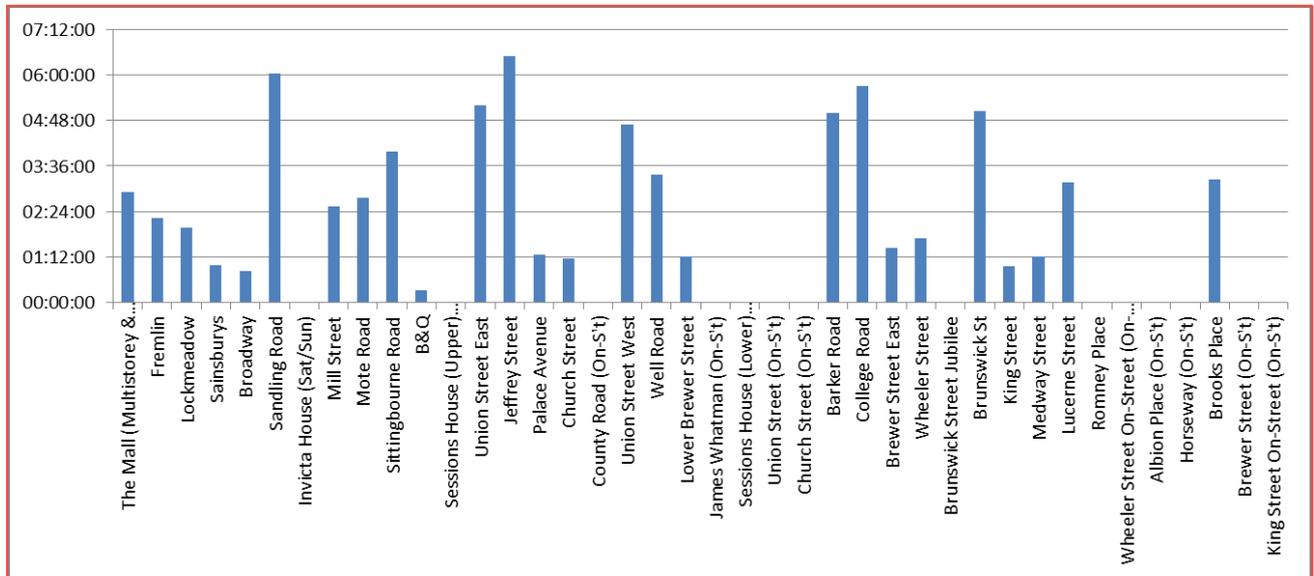
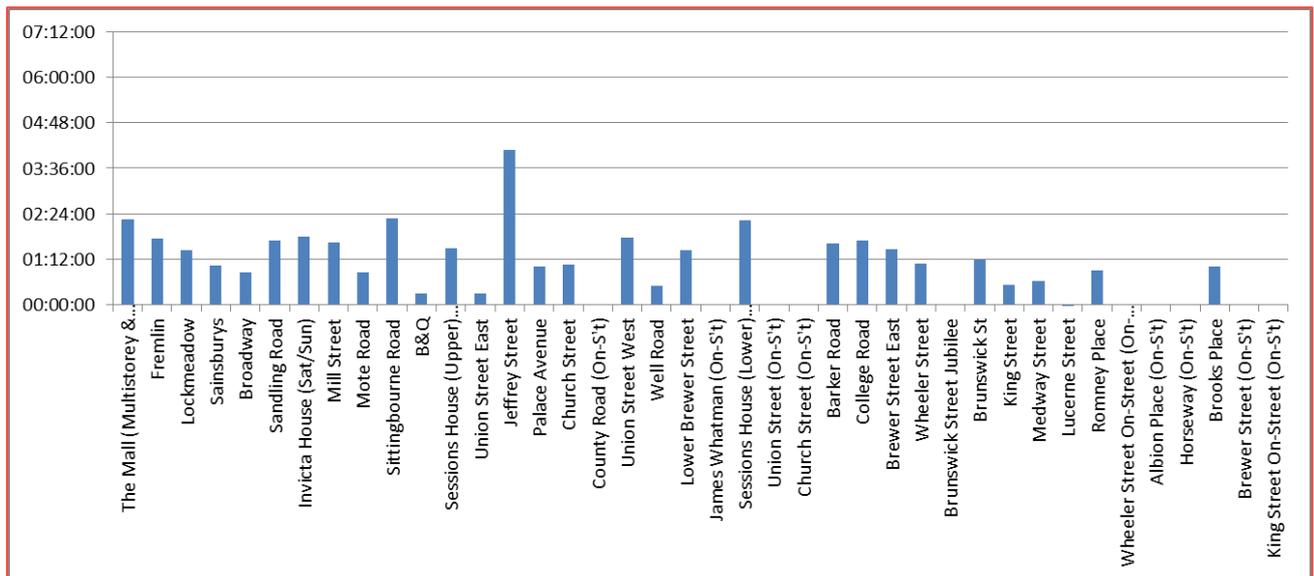


Figure 59 – Car Parking Duration of Stay, Saturday



4.15 FUTURE CAR PARKING DEMAND

- 4.15.1. It is difficult to forecast future car parking demand within a town centre environment within any accuracy and, especially with a potentially significant change in travel behaviour brought about by policy and technology, confidence in any forecast reduces the further forward a forecast seeks to look. The most sensible reference sources are past trends, government travel growth projections and shopping behaviour trends.

PAST TRENDS

- 4.15.2. Data presented in Section 4.10 shows a generally downward trend in car parking demand in the town centre. This is at the same time as the local population is changing as are travel habits, competition and the Town Centre itself.

TRAVEL GROWTH PROJECTIONS

- 4.15.3. Projections for Travel to Maidstone Town Centre (MSOA Maidstone 004) for an Average Day have been extracted from the National Trip End Model (NTEM) database TEMPro 72 for 2017, 27, 37 and 47. This is shown in Table 13. The table indicates a reducing scale of growth over each ten year block for both retail and commuting trips, but overall a growth of a percent or so per year.

Table 13 – Travel Growth to Maidstone Town Centre

	2017		2027		2037		2047	
	Retail	Commuting	Retail	Commuting	Retail	Commuting	Retail	Commuting
All	76017	25896	84554	26807	91532	27523	96297	28256
% Growth			111%	104%	108%	103%	105%	103%
Car	20543	13872	23457	14890	25849	15575	27773	16437
% Growth			114%	107%	110%	105%	107%	106%

SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR TRENDS

- 4.15.4. The 'Statistical bulletin, Retail sales Great Britain: October 2017' published by ONS notes a year on year reduction of total sales of 0.3% but an equivalent year on year growth in internet sales of 10.7% accounting for approximately 16.9% of all retail spending. The breakdown of this shift towards internet spending is shown in Figure 60 drawn from the ONS bulletin showing that a significant portion of the shift is from high street type uses such as department stores and clothing sales.

Figure 60 – Internet Sales Growth

Table 4: Summary of internet statistics: October 2017				Great Britain
Value seasonally adjusted, percentage rates				
Category	Year-on-year growth	Sales as a proportion of all retailing	Index categories and their percentage weights	
All retailing	10.7	16.9	100	
All food	9.0	5.4	14.3	
All non-food	10.3	12.5	35.0	
Department stores	19.2	15.5	8.5	
Textile, clothing and footwear stores	17.9	15.9	12.1	
Household goods stores	2.7	10.8	6.3	
Other stores	-3.2	8.4	8.1	
Non-store retailing	11.3	79.9	50.7	

Source: Monthly Business Survey – Retail Sales Inquiry, Office for National Statistics

- 4.15.5. Reviewing previous years’ sales data from previous ONS bulletins in Table 14 shows a general trend of retail growth but a far greater shift in that growth towards the internet amounting to a net fall in non-internet shopping. This is at the same time as the national population is increasing.

Table 14 – Retail Sales Trends

	Total Retail Growth	Internet Retail Growth	Internet Sales Share of Total
Oct-17	-0.3%	10.7%	16.9%
Oct-16	7.4%	26.8%	15.2%
Oct-15	3.8%	11.2%	12.8%

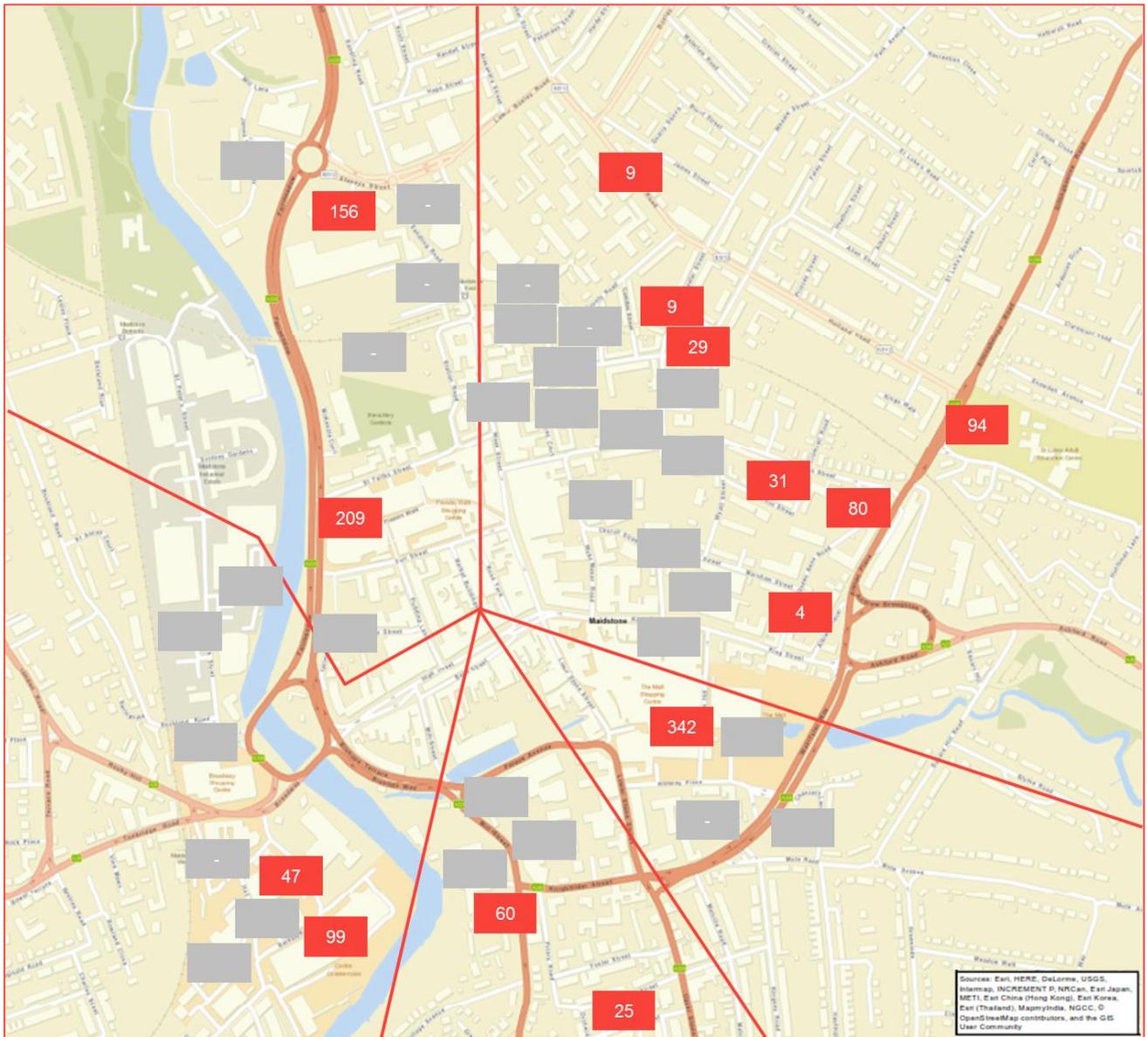
CONCLUSION

- 4.15.6. Overall, it is likely that car parking demand in the Town Centre will continue to decline in the absence of changes to the wider context (policy, charging, competition, regeneration etc) in the short to medium term. This is reflective of a broader change to shopper behaviour. Parking is most likely to be governed by regeneration and policy changes. A growth in parking demand without intervention is unlikely. An optimistic but sensible position may be for parking demand to hold steady with some intervention over the short to medium term.
- 4.15.7. The longer term is far more difficult to forecast with changing technology having the potential to dramatically change the way people travel in the longer term. The rate at which that technology advances and the rate at which society adopts it and the potential for changes in private car ownership cannot be forecast with any certainty. It is reasonably foreseeable that in the longer term car parking demand in the town centre may well dramatically reduce due to vehicle automation.

4.16 LONG STAY TARIFF INCREASES

4.16.1. With reference to the car parking surveys, the number of vehicles staying over 4hrs in each car park has been estimated and is presented in Figure 61. This shows a modest number of drivers staying over 4hrs with the majority parking in car parks outside of MBC direct control. This is a total of 1,195 cars of which some 693 are estimated to be staying over 6hrs.

Figure 61 – Long Stay Parking (>4hrs), Thursday



- 4.16.2. To understand the effect that a 50% increase in long stay parking tariffs may have on the attractiveness of parking in the town centre, reference has been made to 'TRACE, Hague et al, 1999' which presents the results of a comprehensive study into the elasticity of car parking charging and demand. This found, in Table 32 of that reported, that a 10% increase in car parking charges would result in the following changes in travel by car and other modes.

Table 15 - Car Parking Charging Elasticity

	Commuting	Retail & Leisure
Car Driver	-0.8%	-3.0%
Car Passenger	0.2%	0.4%
Public Transport	0.2%	0.4%
Foot & Cycle	0.2%	0.5%

TRACE, 1999, Table 32

- 4.16.3. On the assumption that anyone parking from 4-6 hours is parking for retail and leisure while anyone parking for more than 6hrs is parking for work, this gives rise to the following potential displacement to demand for travel by car to the Town Centre arising from a 50% increase in parking charges, shown in Table 16.

Table 16 – 50% Increase in Car Charging, Daily Car Trip Reduction, Thursday

	All Surveyed Car Parks	MBC Car Parks Only
Total Arrivals	13,974	4870
Arrivals staying 4-6hrs	502	206
Arrivals staying 6+hrs	693	409
50% Charge Increase Displacement	-103	-47

- 4.16.4. On the grounds that MBC only have direct control of their own stock, the increase in car parking charging is likely only to displace some 50 cars across a day, only a proportion of which would be travelling in the peak hour. This gives cause to consider the potential to further increase parking charges, which is presented in Table 17.

Table 17 –Alternative Increases in Car Charging, Daily Car Trip Reduction, Thursday

	All Surveyed Car Parks	MBC Car Parks Only
Total Arrivals	13,974	-
>4hrs, 100% Charge Increase Displacement	-	-95
>4hrs, 200% Charge Increase Displacement		-189
>4hrs, 300% Charge Increase Displacement		-284

- 4.16.5. Any potential congestion and air quality improvements from increasing car parking charging has to be balanced off against the potential economic effects of such a change. In this particular case there is also the question of where that displaced demand may go. Some may shift to sustainable modes. Others may shift to other towns. Some though may simply shift to other parking locations within the town centre undermining the potential benefits. This is essentially the nature of the Town Centre with a parking stock substantially under private control.
- 4.16.6. In practice, while there is clear potential to increase long stay car parking charges not only to the level defined through policy but also beyond, the benefit of this to peak hour congestion and air quality across the day is likely to be limited in the wider context. That is not though to say that it should be discounted, but the scale of the benefits must be understood.

4.17 CAR PARKING OPTIMISATION KEY FINDINGS

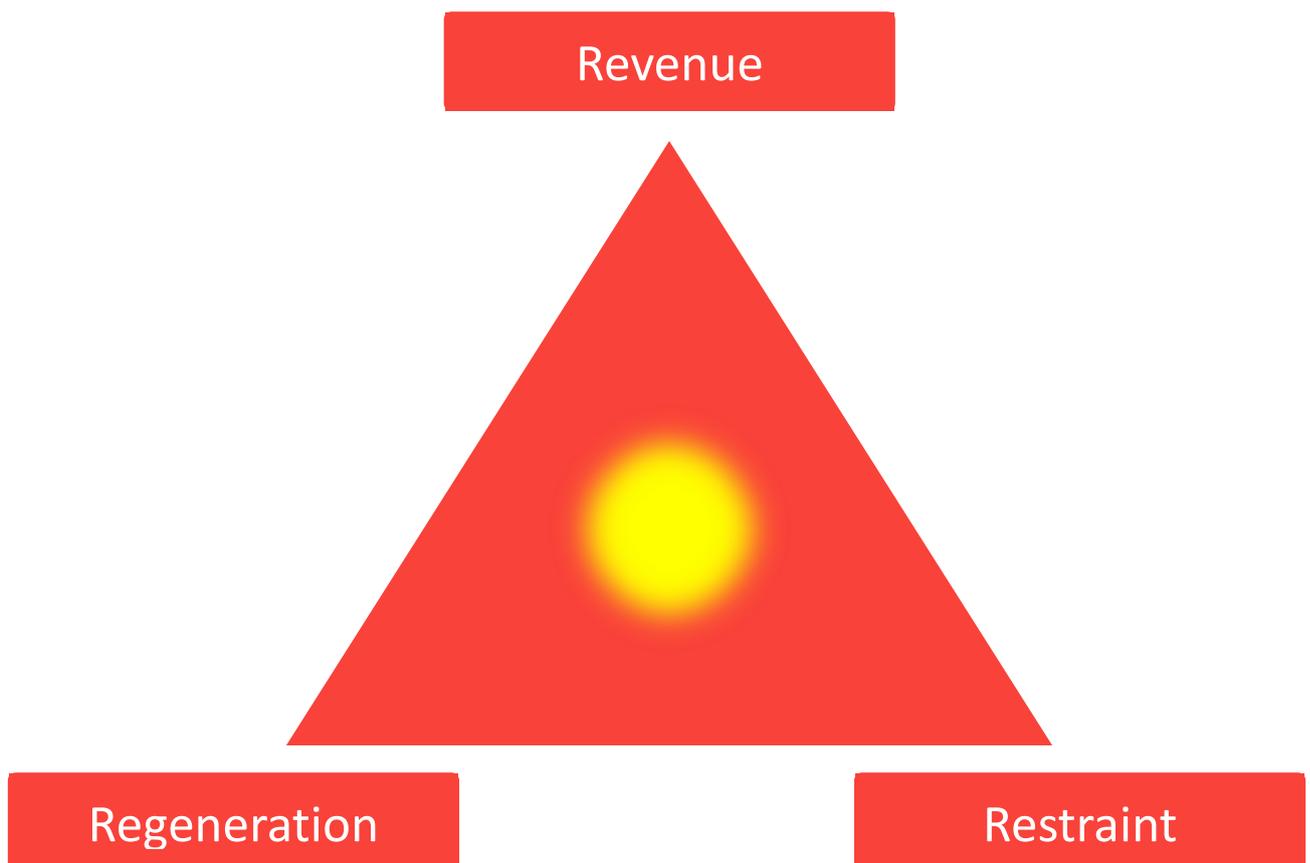
4.17.1. The data collected for the existing operation of the town centre allows several key conclusions to be drawn. These are:

- Overall, the town centre has more than enough parking for current demand
- The town centre is controlled with a sensible ringed approach to stay limits
- The North West and South West zones have ample supply and are underutilised
- The South and South East zones have an imbalance across car parks
- The North East zone suffers generally high parking stress
- Parking in the East is mostly small inefficient car parks
- There is overall more demand on Saturday, but more stress on Thursday

4.18 APPROACH TO PARKING STRATEGY

4.18.1. A parking strategy must balance three competing objectives, shown in Figure 62. The existing operation of the town centre is already balancing these three objectives and the primary question to consider here is whether or not the way in which they are balanced should be adjusted to address current or future operational or policy demands.

Figure 62 – Parking Strategy Balance



4.18.2. The three elements to be balanced are:

- Revenue – the need for car parking to be self-funding (construction, maintenance, operation, policing) and the opportunity for car parking to be a positive contributor to value of land holdings and in this case to add to the ‘public purse’ to fund council services
- Restraint – the need to manage congestion and air quality through limiting the availability to park at a ‘trip-end’ or discouraging car journeys through pricing tariffs
- Regeneration – the need for parking to positively contribute to the town centre economy as a key part of the customer journey and experience in a retail setting, attracting customers and therefore wider town centre revenue

4.18.3. There is no one size fits all solution and hence each town and shopping centre has a unique solution. For example:

- Some towns and cities apply a model heavily focussed on restraint and revenue with high car parking charges and a park & ride system accommodating car borne travel into the heart of the shopping district. Canterbury, Oxford and Cambridge are good examples of this model
- Others conversely have a very heavily regeneration focussed model with ample free or very low cost parking. Chatham and Bluewater are good examples of this model.

4.18.4. Maidstone currently sits in the more common mid position with a mid-level balance of all three objectives without a clear focus on one or other.

4.19 PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE OPTIMISATION OBJECTIVES

4.19.1. The primary issue found in the review of the existing town centre car parking stock is the imbalance in demand between car parks. The primary objective is therefore to **balance the demand for car parking across the town, aiming for no more than an 85% peak occupancy in neutral periods**. In particular, this may be achieved by:

- Changing stay limits and charging regimes
- Enabling dynamic demand monitoring and regime alterations
- Improving signage and advertising for underutilised parking
- Closing small over utilised parking areas to the general public, or re-purpose for local residents
- Providing additional parking where demand is high

4.20 REGIONAL TOWN CENTRE POSITIONING

4.20.1. It is helpful to understand Maidstone’s relative position in the wider regional town centre economy context. The report ‘Maidstone Town Centre Assessment, DTZ, August 2013’ provides a summary of the ranking of Maidstone Town Centre in Figure 3.1 reproduced in Figure 63.

Figure 63 – Town Centre Venue Score Ranking

	2013 Venuescore Rank	2010 Venuescore Rank	2007 Venuescore Rank	Movement (2007-2013)
Maidstone	52	51	33	-19
Ashford	188	162	207	+19
Bluewater	21	32	28	+7
Bromley	36	37	29	-7
Canterbury	75	74	79	+4
Chatham	168	197	181	+13
Chelmsford	72	90	111	+39
Croydon	24	25	31	+7
Dartford	287	206	197	-90
Guildford	33	26	19	-14
Tunbridge Wells	51	54	55	+4

Figure 3.1 Source: Venuescore Ranking Index (2010 and 2013 datasets)

- 4.20.2. Figure 63 shows the relative strength of Maidstone in the regional Town Centre economy. Of the nearest geographical competitors Bluewater is the strongest competitor with Chatham, Ashford and Dartford offering the least attractive competition. Tunbridge Wells is arguably the most comparable Town Centre both in terms of its overall ranking and its geographical location outside of London.

4.21 COMPETITOR TARIFF STRUCTURE

- 4.21.1. Taking Tunbridge Wells as the most comparable Town Centre it is helpful to understand the current pricing structure of the car parks which serve the town centre.

Table 18 – Tunbridge Wells car park tariff

Car Park	Long or short stay	1 hour	2 hour	3 hour	4 hour	5 hour	6 hour	24 hours	Night Rate
Beech Street	Long Stay	£1.40	£2.30	£3.00	£3.80	£4.60		£5.30	
Camden Road	Long Stay	£1.40	£2.30	£3.00	£3.80	£4.60		£5.30	
Crescent Road	Long Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60		£6.30	£1.50
Little Mount Sion	Long Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60		£6.30	
Mount Pleasant Avenue	Long Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60		£6.30	
Royal Victoria Place	Long Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60		£6.30	£1.50
Town Hall Yard	Long Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60		£6.30	£1.50
Union House	Long Stay	£1.40	£2.30	£3.00	£3.80	£4.60		£5.30	
Great Hall	Short Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60	£6.30	£10.40	£1.50
Linden Park Road	Short Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60	£6.30	£10.40	
Meadow Road	Short Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60	£6.30	£10.40	£1.50
Royal Victoria Place	Short Stay	£1.60	£2.80	£3.80	£4.80	£5.60	£6.30	£10.40	£1.50
Torrington	Short Stay	£0.80	£1.40	£3.80	£4.70	£6.00		£10.40	£1.50

- 4.21.2. Through comparing Table 18 (TW tariffs) with and (MBC tariffs), the charging levels are broadly consistent in absolute terms but with some significant variation for some bandings in a proportional sense and between car park duration of stay limits.
- 4.21.3. Bluewater as strongest competitor offers free parking, as a purpose built out-of-town shopping centre.
- 4.21.4. Medway Council (Chatham) meanwhile as the closest competitor, although lower ranked, charges a comparable tariff for short stay but is below Maidstone in its Long Stay charging; see Table 19.

Table 19 - Chatham Car Park Tariffs

Time	Charge
0.5 hours	£0.50
1 hour	£1.00
2 hours	£1.50
4 hours	£2.50
6 hours	£3.50
6 hour +	£5.20

4.22 PROPOSED BASELINE MBC TARIFF STRUCTURE

- 4.22.1. It would be sensible to rebase the MBC parking tariff structure to reflect the charging tariffs of competitor parking stocks within Maidstone Town Centre and in competitor centres. Table 20 shows the proposed baseline tariff structure at 2017 prices.

Table 20 – Proposed MBC Tariff Structure

Ref.	Control	<0.5	<1	<1.5	<2	<3	<4	<5	<10	<12	>12hr
Short Stay	MBC		£1.50		£2.50		£4.00	x	x	x	x
Long Stay	MBC		£1.50		£2.50		£4.00				£6.50
On Street	MBC		£1.50	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

4.23 PARK & RIDE OPTION TESTING

- 4.23.1. The Park and Ride Study considers the option of closing of one or both of the current Park and Ride sites at London Road and Willington Street. This has implications for the town centre both in terms of car parking occupancy and car parking revenue.
- 4.23.2. Table 21 sets out an estimate of the potential revenue which could be generated by the closure of each Park & Ride site. To prepare a revenue estimate, an assumption has been made on the proportion of the journeys to the town centre which would transfer to MBC car parks following a closure of either site. MBC controls much of the spare and relatively low cost long stay car parking in the town centre and it is therefore sensible to assume that much of what does transfer would transfer to MBC car parks. Short stay journeys however would not so readily transfer to the MBC parking supply given that the majority of the short stay parking stock is controlled privately and that many of the short stay journeys are concessionary and may therefore divert to other towns if not able to park and travel for free. A relatively pessimistic view has therefore been taken on the transfer potential of short stay parking to MBC stock.

Table 21 - Parking Revenue Implications

	Willington Street	London Road
Annual Bus Passengers (total)	280,000	229,000
Annual Bus Passengers (each way)	140,000	114,500
Car Occupancy before 0900	1.27	1.27
Car Occupancy after 1000	1.59	1.59
Estimated Average Car Occupancy	1.40	1.40
Estimated Annual Car Trips	100,000	81,786
Peak (Long Stay)	21%	21%
Off Peak Concessionary	54%	54%
Off Peak Other	25%	25%
Typical Long Stay Parking Charge	£6.00	£6.50
Typical Short Stay Parking Charge	£2.50	£2.50
Long Stay Transfer to MBC Car Parks	80%	80%
Short Stay Transfer to MBC Car Parks	20%	20%
Long Stay Parking Revenue Increase	£100,800.00	£89,310.31
Short Stay Revenue Increase	£39,500.00	£32,305.47
Total Revenue Increase	£140,300.00	£121,615.78

- 4.23.3. The implication of this potential revenue generation is considered further in section 5.8.

- 4.23.4. Table 22 sets out an estimate of the potential displaced car parking which could transfer to the town centre due to the closure of each Park & Ride site. The town centre has overall adequate capacity to accommodate the additional car demand which could arise from closure of each of both Park & Ride sites on a weekday. Weekend Park & Ride usage is much lower than on a weekday.

Table 22 – Weekday Parking Occupancy Implications

	Willington Street	London Road
Peak Cars Parked before 0900	148	114
Peak Cars Parked after 1000	248	210
Estimated Long Stay Max Accumulation	148	114
Estimated Short Stay Max Accumulation	100	96
10hrs+ Unused Town Centre Spaces	899	899
All Unused Town Centre Spaces	1471	1471

- 4.23.5. The weight of long stay parking demand from the closure of London Road would be likely to transfer to Lockmeadow and Barker Road which have adequate available capacity to accommodate that demand. This would largely intercept trips on the approach to the town centre although to access Lockmeadow and Barker Road from the west an approaching vehicle must circulate around the gyratory across the River Medway. Any Closure of Willington Street would increase stress on the more stressed side of the town centre with additional trips travelling into and through the town centre to find available parking across the available supply with no obvious single receptor for the demand.
- 4.23.6. By far the greater potential to generate ring fenced revenue through parking to support a continued Park & Ride service is through a more general, though modest, increase in parking tariffs across the MBC supply. MBC ticket sales data indicate a typical 20,000 tickets being sold per week across the MBC stock. An increase of £0.10 per ticket may generate additional revenue of some £100,000 per year. The proposed re-based tariff structure shown in Table 20 may generate an uplift in revenue of c.£300,000 per year as shown in Table 23 which is likely to be sufficient to cover the current P&R net funding support from MBC.

Table 23 – Estimated Parking Tariff Change Revenue Implications

	Town Centre
w/c 18/09/17 Cash Ticket Revenue	£37,768
w/c 18/09/17 Cash Ticket Sales	17,128
Average Revenue per Ticket	£2.21
Assumed Non-Cash Ticket %	c.10%
Assumed Non-Cash Tickets	c.1,700
Estimated Sandling Road Tickets	c.1,300
Total Weekly Ticket Sales	c.20,000
Equivalent Average Revenue per Ticket from New Tariff	c.£2.50
Estimated Additional Revenue per Week	c.£6,000
Estimated Additional Revenue per Annum	c.£300,000

4.24 REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.24.1. The overall town centre car parking supply is adequately sized to support a vibrant town centre economy. There are however points of stress which should be addressed to improve efficiency and the ‘customer journey’.
- 4.24.2. In particular it would be beneficial to reduce the duration of stay limits and/or increase car parking charging in the busiest and smallest car parking areas. As this is a ‘strategy’ rather than a ‘plan’ it would not be appropriate to identify definite and specific actions for individual car parks at this stage, but a more detailed implementation plan should be prepared in due course seeking to pursue the following strategy following appropriate consultation:
- The stay limit for on-street car parking in the north-east area should be reduced from 2hrs to 1hr to better accommodate short stay pop-in journeys and reduce hunting behaviour in the north-east area (County Road [On-St], Church Street [On-St], Union Street [On-St], Brewer Street [On-St], King Street On-Street [On-St], Wheeler Street On-Street [On-St], Albion Place [On-St])
 - Long stay car parking in the north-east area should be reduced to increase capacity for short stay parking by displacing a small number of long stay trips while accommodating a greater number of short stay journeys throughout the day (Union Street West, Union Street East, Sittingbourne Road)
 - Smaller car parks (fewer than 50 spaces) should be critically reviewed and either closed, limited to residents and/or permit holders only, or have reduced stay limits (2hr rather than 4hr) and higher tariffs (c.50% above baseline) (Union Street West, Well Road, Lucerne Street, Brooks Place)
- 4.24.3. The MBC charging regime is of a suitable order and scale but there is an opportunity to ‘reset’ the charging to a new baseline to better reflect the charging regimes of private operators and other comparable town centres. This should be pursued and any additional revenue should be reinvested in measures to meet Integrated Transport Strategy objectives and transport related Local Plan policies such as Park & Ride or measures to improve air quality.
- 4.24.4. The charging infrastructure used in most MBC car parks is aging and does not reflect the modern technology or payment methods. It is not practical to introduce barrier controlled entry in the majority of cases and therefore a more pragmatic solution should be pursued allowing card payments and pay-on departure. A system similar to that already operating in Sandling Road car park would be appropriate across the MBC estate.
- 4.24.5. To effect a material change in the prevalence of long stay parking in the town centre, long stay charging increases should continue to increase above and beyond the 50% target set out in the Integrated Transport Strategy and at a faster pace. As a great deal of the long stay supply is outside of MBC control, Town Centre Parking operators should increase car parking charges in combination with MBC to avoid displacement within the Town Centre.
- 4.24.6. In particular, The Mall multi-storey car park is broken into two elements with the rooftop element accessed from King Street while the multi-storey element is accessed from Romney Place. The rooftop car park element frequently reaches and exceeds capacity while the multi-storey continues to operate well. This car park serves an important function for trips approaching from the north east and east and re-opening a connection between the two car parks should be investigated.
- 4.24.7. In the medium to long term, an idealised car parking strategy would see trips intercepted on their approach to the town centre at the edge. This works well on the Royal Engineers Road approach to the town centre with Sanding Road, Maidstone East and Fremlin Walk intercepting journeys offering great potential to intercept trips on this corridor.

- 4.24.8. The Tonbridge Road and London Road approaches are well served by Lockmeadow and the wider car parking west of the river Medway. This is though underutilised which may be partly associated with its location but may also be a result of the car park only being accessible from the east; traffic approaching from the west must cross the river and double back to access the Lockmeadow area. Options to open the right turn from Barker Road into Broadway should be investigated to increase the attractiveness of Lockmeadow and intercept trips before reaching the town centre.
- 4.24.9. The Sittingbourne Road and College Road approaches to the town centre do not currently offer any significant opportunities to intercept trips just beyond the edge of the town centre. There would be merit in investigating such opportunities in future and for car parking closer to the heart of the town centre, which would then be surplus, being redeveloped or restricted to very short stay limits.
- 4.24.10. Many journeys into the town centre are repeat journeys by local shoppers with set habits. Signage on the approach to the town centre should be reviewed to provide greater emphasis on the number of bays accessible on routes at major decision points/junctions. Perhaps a more important measure, in the context of the 'routine' driver behaviour, is a broader advertising campaign to encourage use of those car parks which are currently underutilised.

3

PARK & RIDE STUDY



5 PARK & RIDE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1. There is an ongoing internal MBC review of the existing P&R provision, conducted in tandem with the procurement of a new bus service contract, which aims to evaluate the current operation and finance of existing services.
- 5.1.2. Consequently, this report will focus on analysing the data collected as part of the MBC internal review in order to understand:
- Existing operational issues (if not fully covered by MBC's internal review);
 - The impact of the previous closure of the Sittingbourne Road P&R site;
 - Existing demand for P&R services;
 - Existing main traffic flows to Maidstone town centre.
- 5.1.3. Through the above findings, options to improve Park& Ride performance in the short-term will be developed.
- 5.1.4. Finally, this report will investigate opportunities to introduce Micro P&R and new P&R sites to address the strategic long-term requirements for main highway corridors.

CONTEXT

- 5.1.5. The Census data presented in Table 2 indicates that the majority of the working population (65%) reaches their working location by driving a car or by being a passenger, while 10% use public transport. The remainder either walk, cycle or work from home. P&R services present a sustainable alternative to a significant proportion of the Maidstone population, who currently use a private vehicle to reach their workplace.
- 5.1.6. Current planning documents anticipate that the Borough will experience significant residential and employment growth, and therefore the effects of further congestion in the future could affect travel to work mode choice.
- 5.1.7. P&R is one of the tools used by local authorities to manage road space and parking stock. Depending on the specific need of a particular location, different strategies can be implemented. These strategies generally aim to encourage commuters to park in the outskirts of the town, thus reducing the traffic and easing congestion on roads into town during peak hours.
- 5.1.8. Academic research indicates that P&R schemes should not be implemented in isolation but should go hand in hand with town centre car parking controls and a careful review of town centre parking availability and tariffs. This study had therefore been developed in tandem with the Town Centre Parking Strategy.
- 5.1.9. P&R schemes are generally justified based on three main factors: effective use of road space reducing further significant spending on infrastructure; environmental improvements such as reduction of pollution or accidents; and stimulation of economic activity by relieving congestion. The two latter benefits are often challenging to assess for a monetary value. Although some examples do exist of commercially viable P&R services, most UK schemes still tend to require ongoing financial support in order to bridge the gap between the cost of providing the site (including bus service operation) and the revenue from users, as the parking charge or bus fare is usually less than the non-P&R scheme equivalent.

- 5.1.10. Maidstone has historically supported the principle of P&R. The first site serving the town opened in 1989 with 3 others opening in subsequent years. All sites have operated with dedicated bus services, with the charge made for the bus service rather than the parking. The four sites are:-
- Willington Street, off the A20, 2 miles east of the centre, opened in 1989;
 - Coombe Quarry, Armstrong Road, 1.5 miles south of centre, opened in 1990;
 - London Road, off the A20 to the west of the centre, opened in 1991;
 - Sittingbourne Road, off Bearsted Road near to the A249, opened in 1998.
- 5.1.11. Operational and financial reviews carried out on the P&R sites over the years lead to the closure of two sites: Coombe Quarry and Sittingbourne Road in September 2007 and February 2016 respectively. The London Road and Willington Street sites remain open and both still provide direct and dedicated bus connection to Maidstone town centre. Therefore, this report will focus on understanding their performance.

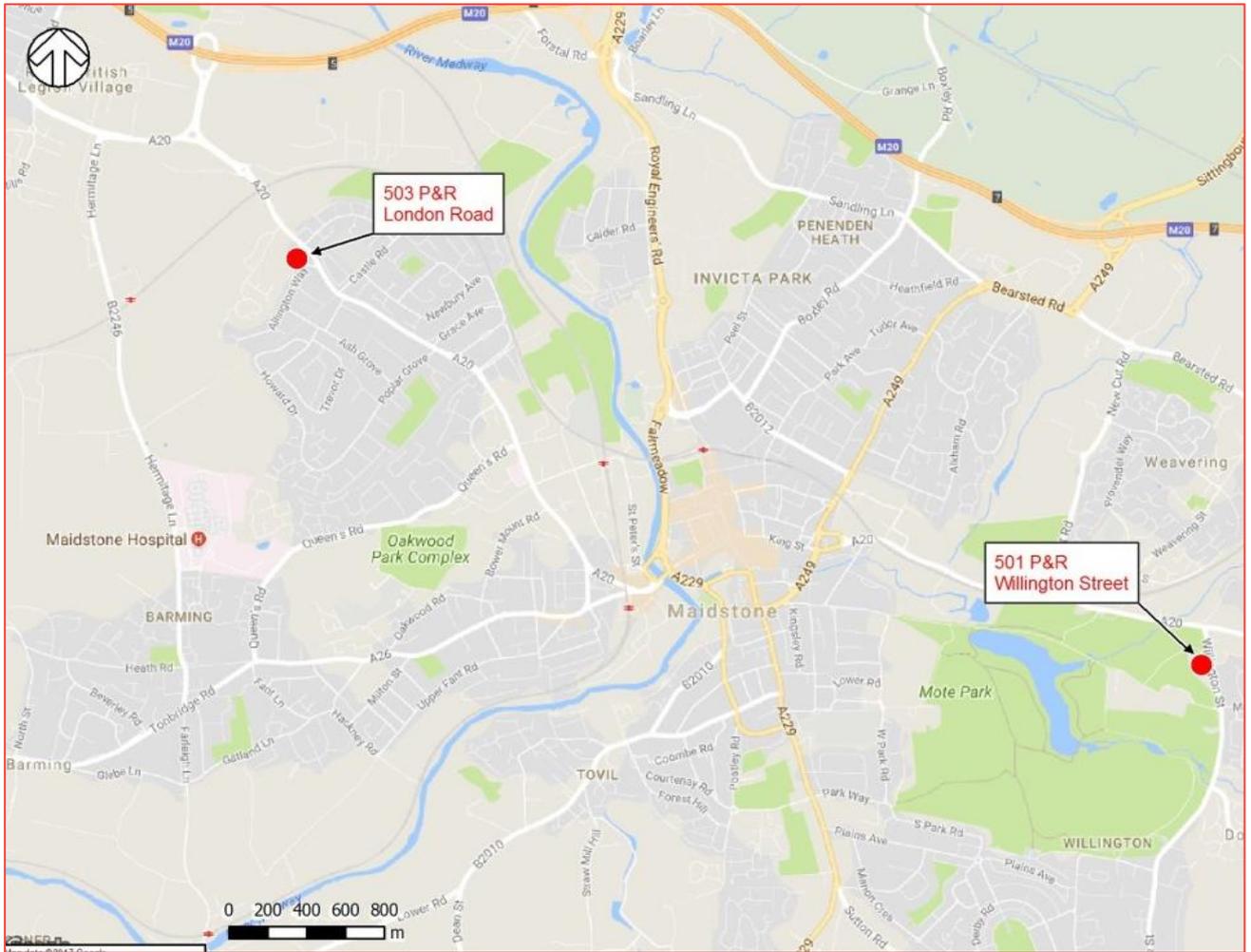
5.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

- 5.2.1. This section reviews the existing P&R service. It also presents information related to the closure of the Sittingbourne Road site where available, and finally it investigates the main highway corridor to/from Maidstone town centre.

P&R DESCRIPTION

- 5.2.2. There are currently two P&R sites in Maidstone. The first site is located on Willington Street, to the east of Maidstone town centre, and caters for the traffic on the A20 which has come from the east, The second site is located on London Road, catering for traffic on the A20 coming from the west (and north) as illustrated in Figure 64.

Figure 64 – Maidstone P&R Site locations



- 5.2.3. The Willington Road car park provides 400 car parking spaces. Surveys undertaken by MBC in September 2017 recorded around 148 vehicles parked before 9:00 am and a maximum of 248 vehicles parked after 10:00 am on the busiest weekday (See Table 65). Thus, the utilisation of the P&R site is estimated to range between 37% in peak hours and 62% off peak.
- 5.2.4. The London Road site provides 518 car parking spaces. Surveys undertaken by MBC in September 2017 recorded around 114 vehicles parked before 9:00 and a maximum of 210 vehicles parked after 10:00 am on the busiest weekday (See Table 65). Thus the utilisation of the P&R site is estimated to range between 22% in peak hours and 40% off peak.

Table 65 – MBC P&R car survey results

	Weekday		
	Willington P&R (max car)	London Road (max car)	Pax per car
Before 9 am	148	114	1.27
After 10 am	248	210	1.59

Source: MBC survey 22 to 28 September 2017 - weekdays only

- 5.2.5. Overall the utilisation figures indicate a significant amount of spare capacity in the P&R sites, particularly during peak hours and possibly results in the provision of a 20-minute frequency for the bus services (both peak and off-peak), which is less frequent than is normally seen for UK P&R schemes.
- 5.2.6. The survey analysis also revealed an overall car occupancy of 1.27 passengers per car before 9 am and 1.59 passengers per car after 10 am (Table 65).
- 5.2.7. A study carried out by JMP in 2011 revealed much lower usage on Saturdays and, combined with the data in Table 3, indicates that weekday commuters are the majority users of the P&R services at both sites.
- 5.2.8. Both P&R sites are open from 6.30am and close at 6.40pm and may only be used by P&R customers, although anecdotal reports have been received regarding users of the adjoining Mote Park using the site to park for free.
- 5.2.9. Each site offers a dedicated direct bus service to/from Maidstone town centre (routes 501 from Willington Street and 503 from London Road).
- 5.2.10. Bus priorities are provided along the following bus route alignments:
- Bus lane inbound on London Road between Hildenborough Crescent and Castle Road, between opposite Conway Road and the approach to Grace Avenue, and between Grace Avenue and Palmar Road;
 - High Street/King Street is buses and taxis only between Wyke Manor Road (to the east of stop L1 shown in Figure 4) and the junction with Broadway/Bishops Way;
 - Sections of bus lane before and after the junction of New Cut road and the A20, inbound and outbound.
- 5.2.11. Figure 66 illustrates the roads used by the bus services. Although these are shown as separate routes in Figure 4 (which dates from 2014, but is still the map available on MBC's website), the buses actually operate as one through service, with buses changing the displayed route number in the town centre.

Figure 66 – Map of route 501 and 503 bus services (source MBC website, 2017)

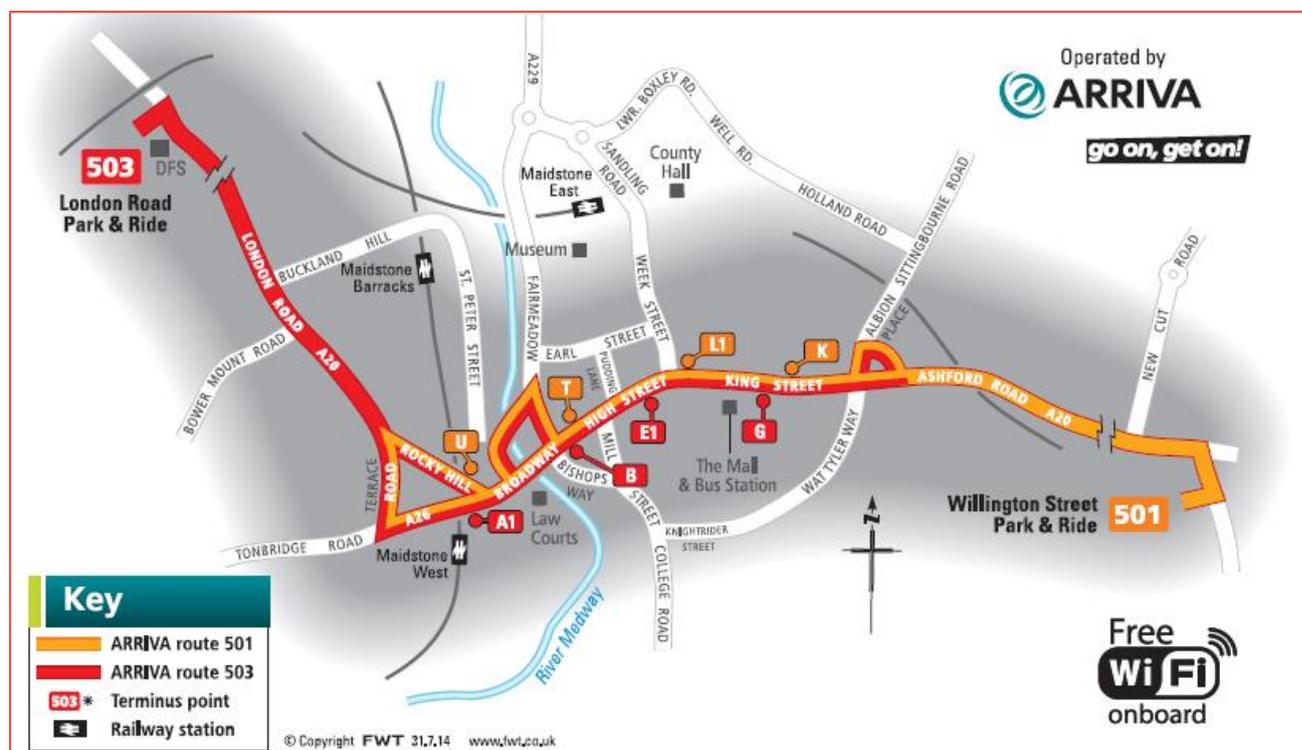


Table 24 - Characteristics of P&R sites

	London Road	Willington Street
Location	A20 (West)	A20 (East)
Car park spaces	518	400
Dedicated bus services route number	503	501
Frequency	every 20 min	every 20 min
AM peak scheduled run time in peak direction	9 min	6 min
PM peak scheduled run time in peak direction	12 min	6 min

FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

- 5.2.12. While the parking element of P&R is free, a fare has to be paid to use the bus service.
- 5.2.13. The fares presented in Table 25 are advertised on the MBC website as being available for P&R services. A corresponding unit price was estimated based on expected travel patterns.

Table 25 - P&R fares & estimated unit prices (Source: MBC website)

	Current Prices	Estimated unit price	Unit cost estimation assumptions
Peak Day Return (up to 9am inclusive Monday to Friday)	£2.60	£1.30	Return divided by 2
OffPeak Day Return	£1.60	£0.80	Return divided by 2
10 Single Trip Ticket (must be used within three months of buying)	£10.30	£1.03	Total divided by 10
12 Week Season Ticket	£103	£0.94	Based on 11 weeks travel, 5 days a week, 2 trips a day
Annual Season Ticket	£412	£0.86	Based on 48 weeks travel, 5 days a week, 2 trips a day
Children under five	Free	£0.00	-
Up to two children under 17 with a full paying adult during off peak hours and Saturdays	Free	£0.00	-
Other concessions (Elderly and disabled) during off peak hours and Saturdays	Free	£0.00	Although these passengers travel free, MBC receives reimbursement for these journeys from KCC under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme-

- 5.2.14. MBC contracted Arriva Southern Counties to operate the P&R services, for a cost of £3,030,476 between 29th March 2014 and 31st May 2018. In preparation for the end of the contract, a new contract notice was published in summer 2017 which sought a P&R services supplier for a further 10 years. This procurement exercise is understood to be under evaluation, with a decision on contract award expected by January 2018.
- 5.2.15. Fare revenue is passed to MBC and any shortfall in the cost of the dedicated bus service is borne by MBC.
- 5.2.16. Table 26 shows an estimate of the overall annual cost of the P&R services at current prices, and current level of revenue. MBC is left with a shortfall of around £242,000 per year to cover the service, which represents 41% of the total cost of the service.

Table 26 - Estimated Annual P&R Service Cost & Revenue

	Cost (£ '000)	Source
Current cost	-£584,000	MBC
Estimated revenue incl rents	£342,000	MBC
Shortfall	-£242,000 (-41%)	

CURRENT DEMAND ANALYSIS

Datasets

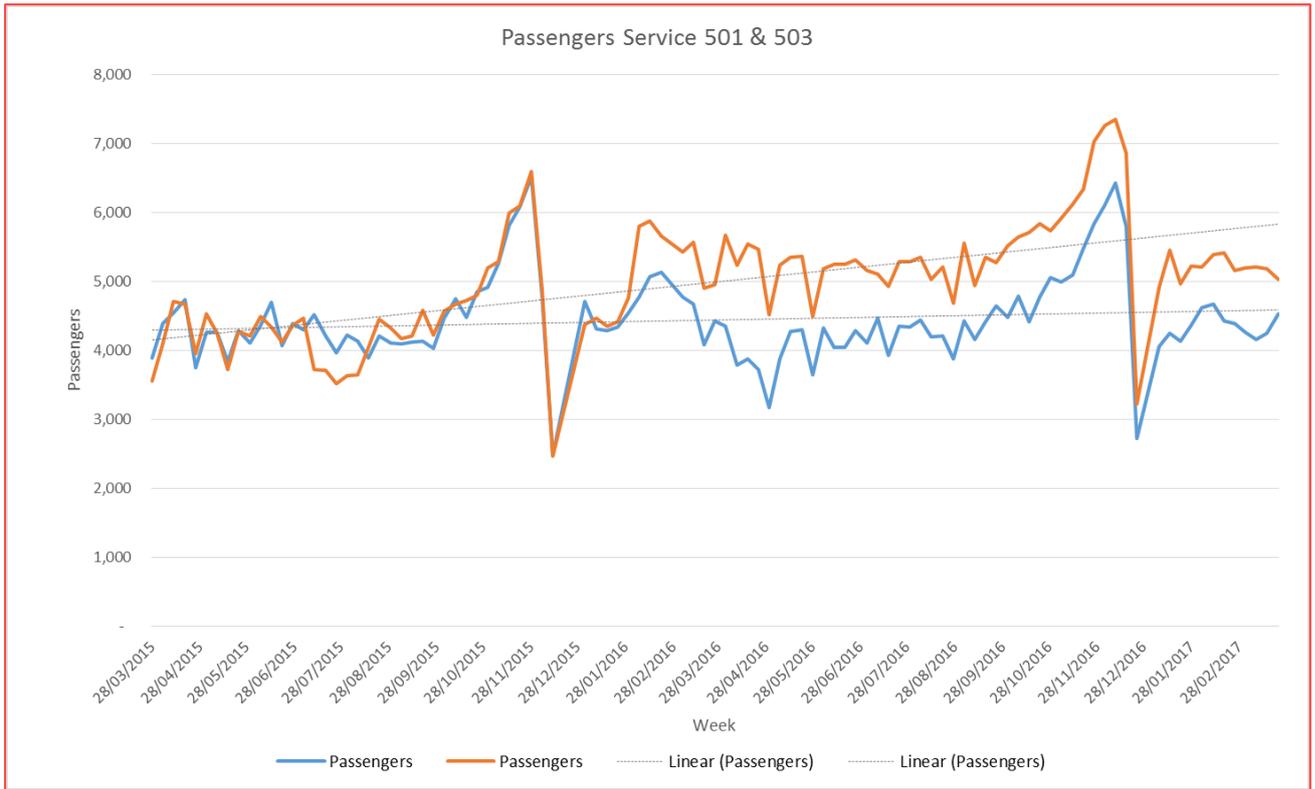
5.2.17. Three different sources of data were utilised to conduct the analysis:

- Recent data obtained from the bus operator (Arriva) in the form of two datasets:
 - The first one contains the number of passengers per week for financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17 for both routes 501 and 503;
 - The second dataset contains the revenue collected per week for each route, by ticket type. Ticket type categories include “10 Trip”, “12 Week / 3 Month”, “Pass” (understood to include concessionary passes), “Return”, “Return – Peak” and “Single”.
- The results of a P&R car and passenger survey conducted in September 2017 by MBC;
- The results of the two P&R online surveys conducted by MBC. These were utilised to validate observations from the Arriva data and to derive knowledge from user and non-user respondents.

Annual Demand Analysis

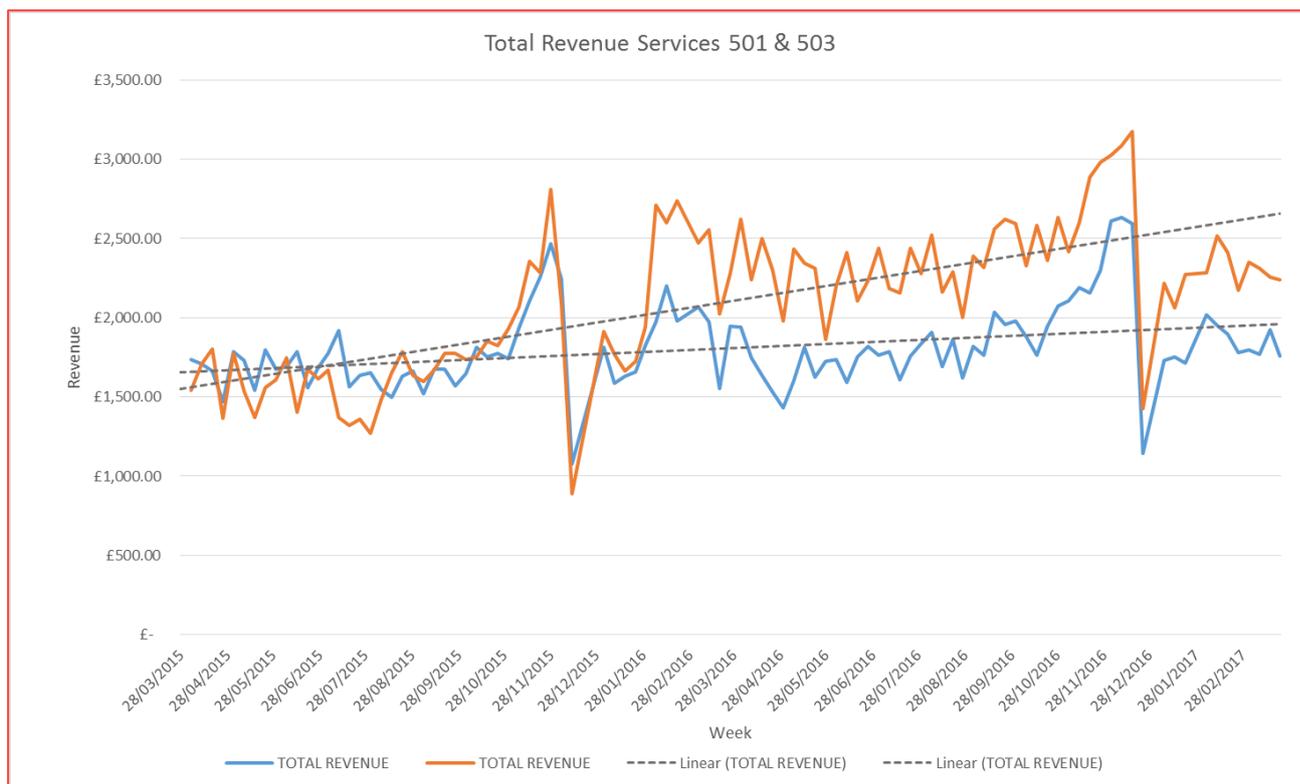
- 5.2.18. Arriva provided MBC with a weekly passenger count on both routes 501 and 503, as well as corresponding revenue for financial years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. These were analysed and the results are presented in Figure 67, Figure 68 and Figure 69.
- 5.2.19. Overall in 2016/2017, the Willington Street site generated 280,000 passenger trips, while London Road generated 229,000.
- 5.2.20. The passenger counts (Figure 67) for route 503 demonstrate a minor increase in weekly passenger numbers during March 2015 and March 2017, with an average of 4,500 passengers per week (Figure 69).
- 5.2.21. A significant increase is observed in weekly passenger numbers for route 501 (Figure 67), reaching an average of around 5,400 passengers per week. The increase occurs from February 2016 and is believed to be due to the closure of the Sittingbourne Road P&R site. A separate section in this report is dedicated to understanding the impact of the closure of the Sittingbourne Road P&R site.

Figure 67 – Weekly passenger trends on routes 501 and 503 for FY2015/16 and 2016/17



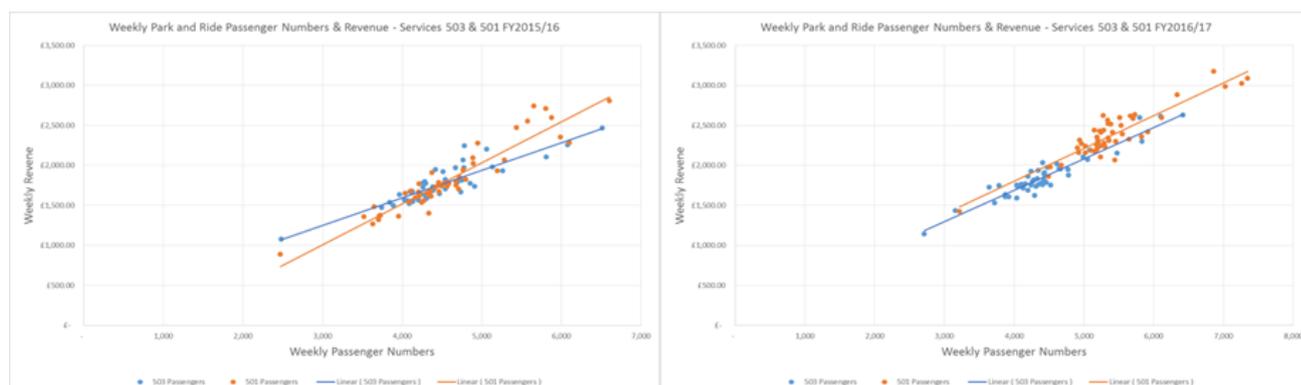
5.2.22. The revenue figures for both services amplify the increase observed in passenger numbers, as illustrated in Figure 68.

Figure 68 – Weekly revenue trends on routes 501 and 503 for FY 2015/16 and FY2016/17



5.2.23. Figure 69 illustrates the change in average weekly passenger numbers and revenue for route 501 for the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Figure 69 – Weekly average passengers and revenue on routes 501 and 503 for FY 2015/16 and FY2016/17



5.2.24. As demonstrated through Figure 67 and Figure 68, the P&R passenger data presents multiple variations in demand throughout the year. This includes low usage over Christmas and New Year and the summer months, and increased usage in the period approaching Christmas.

5.2.25. Figure 69 illustrates that the variation between low and high demand weeks can sometimes be significant. For example, the lowest week on route 503 shows fewer than 3,000 passengers a week, and just over £1,200 in revenue, while the busiest week reaches more than 6,000 passengers and over £2,500 in revenue. Similar phenomena are observed for route 501.

Daily usage

- 5.2.26. Car and P&R bus passenger surveys conducted by MBC between 22nd and 28th September 2017 have been used to understand utilisation throughout the day. Figure 70 and Figure 71 illustrate that the busiest trips departing from the P&R sites recorded over 60 passengers shortly after 9:30am, catering for early off-peak passengers for both London Road and Willington Street sites, thus indicating the potential risk of leaving passengers behind between 9:30am and 10:00am. Willington Street data also highlights busy bus trips around 8:30 am, with more than 50 passengers recorded on the departing journey at that time.
- 5.2.27. As expected, usage is building up in the morning and slowly decreasing in the evening. The last few bus trips into town are almost empty but are required for marketing and operational purposes.
- 5.2.28. Figure 72 illustrates the combined number of passengers on P&R services per hour and the corresponding cumulative estimated number of cars parked in the P&R sites. Overall, based on average occupancy, it is estimated that over 800 vehicles are using the P&R sites during a busy weekday. However, it is unlikely that this figure is representative of the maximum number of vehicles parked at any one time.

Figure 70 – Passengers per bus trip departing from London Road P&R site

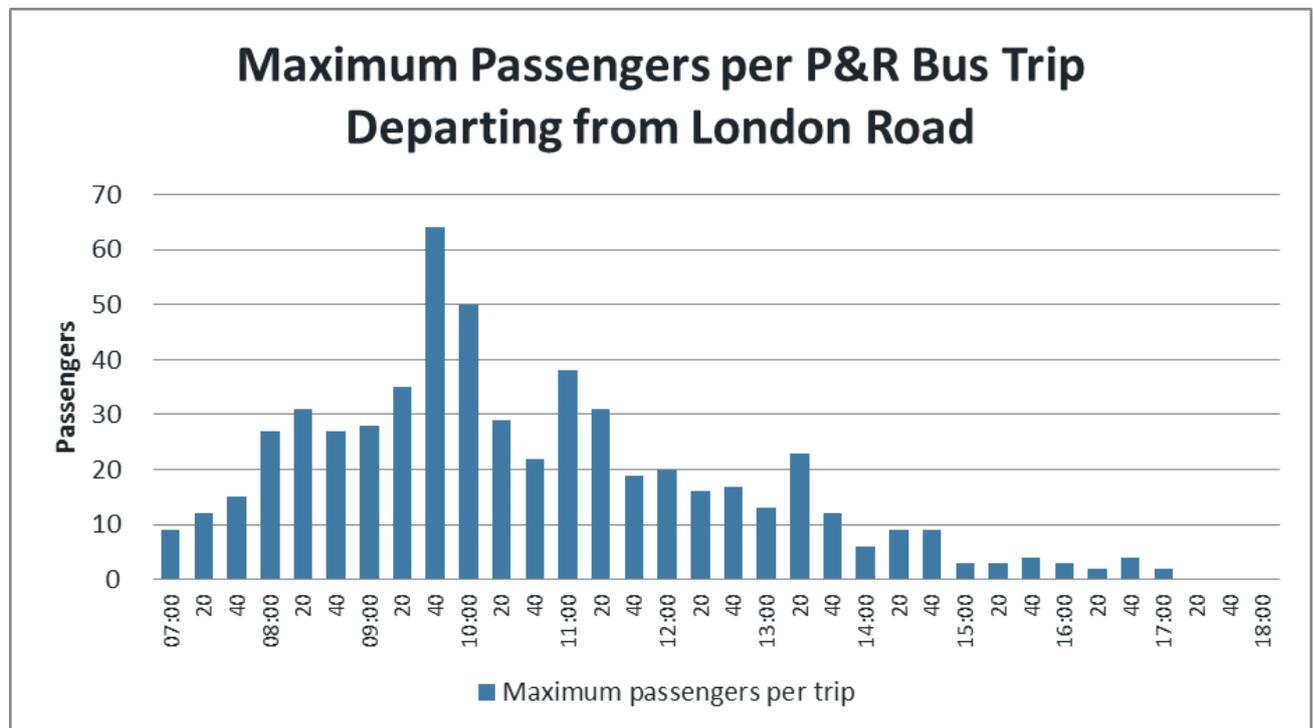


Figure 71 – Passengers per bus trip departing from Willington Street P&R site

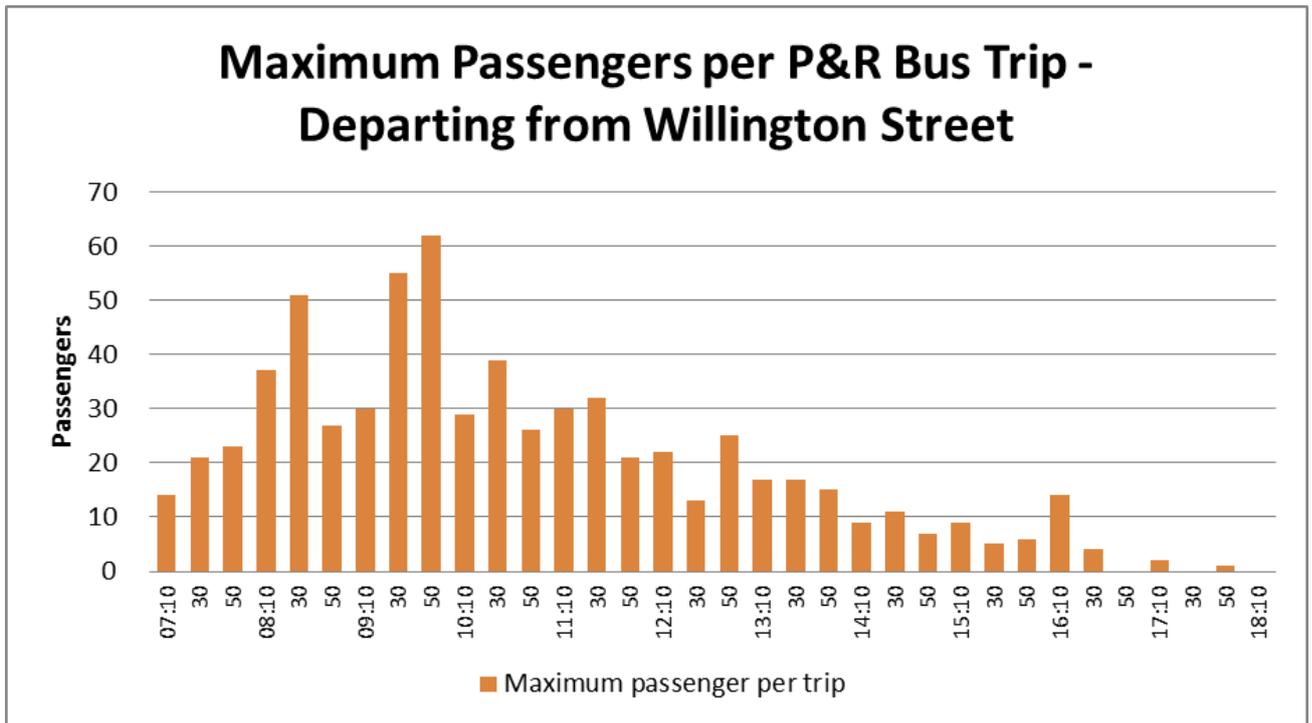
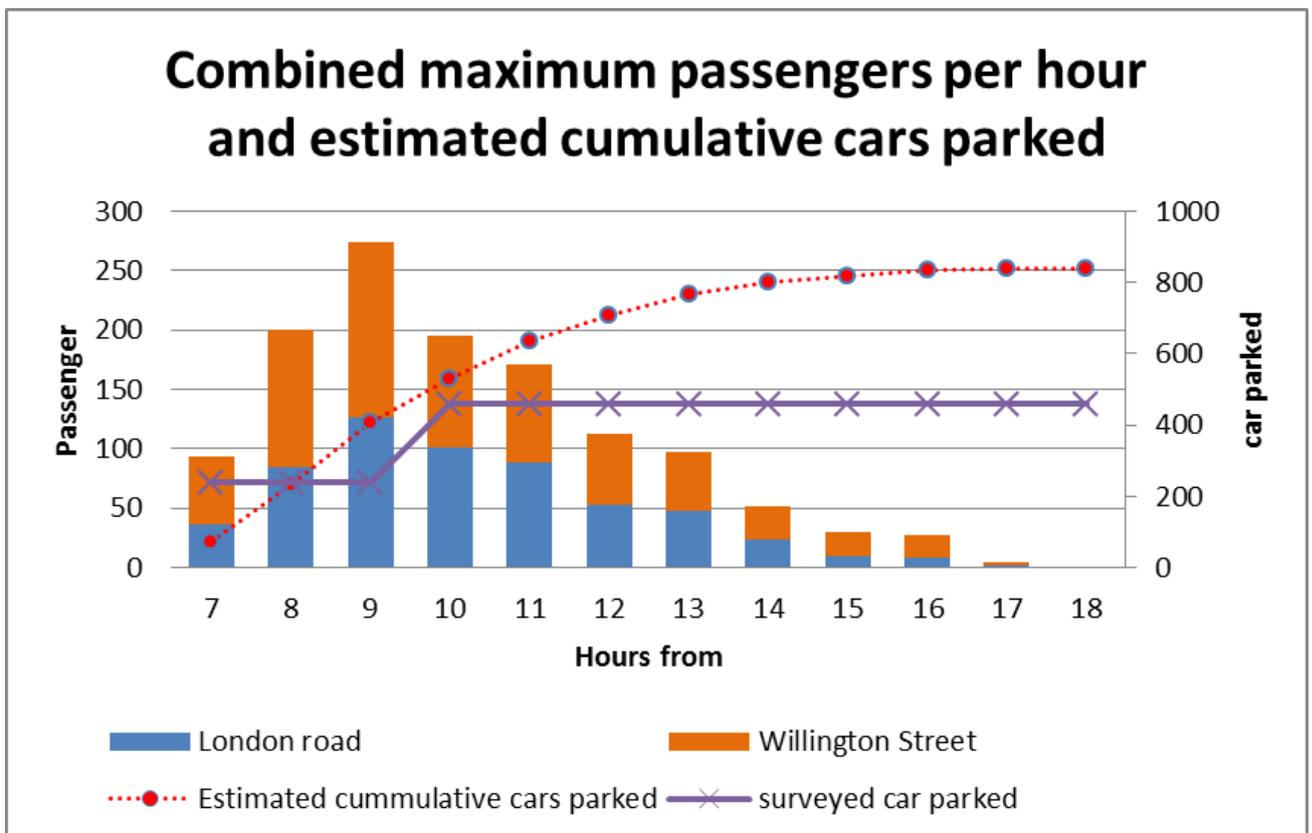


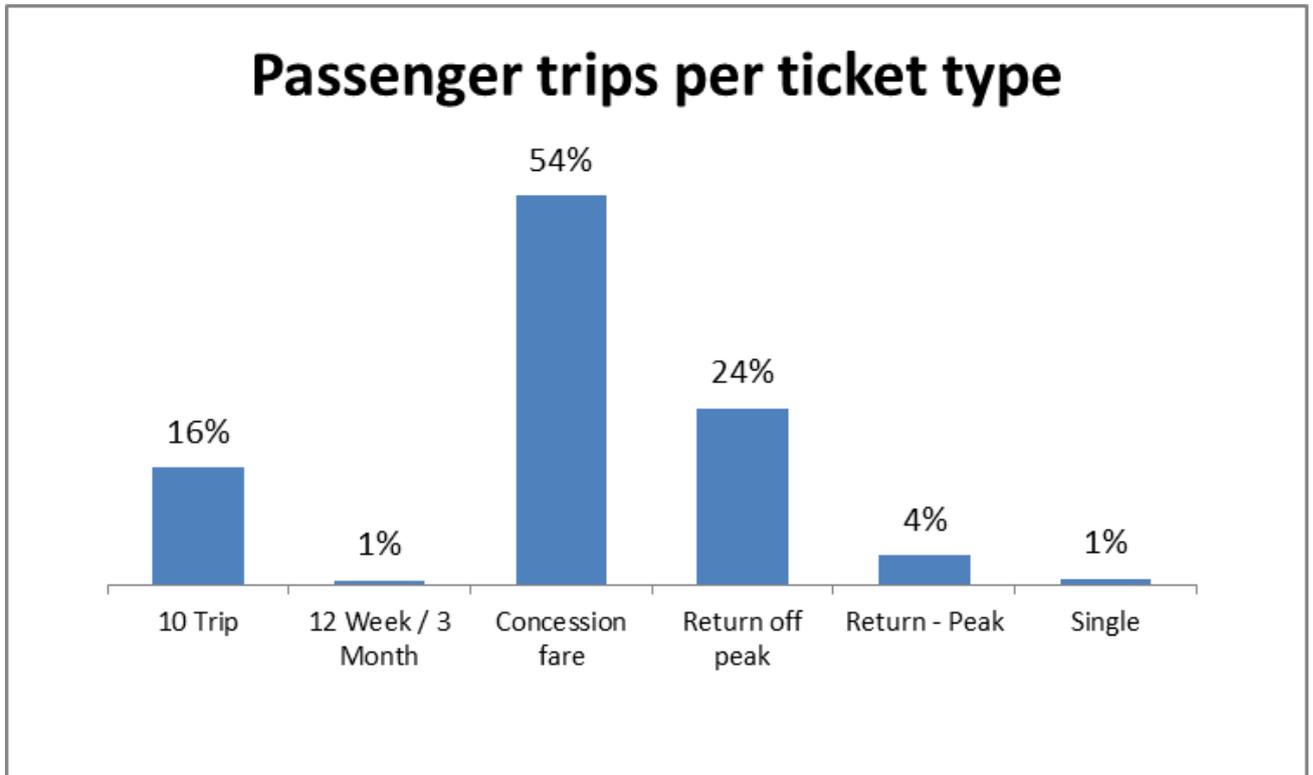
Figure 72 – Combined passenger per hour and estimated cumulative car parked



USER MARKET SHARE

- 5.2.29. Passenger numbers per ticket type were derived from revenue data provided by Arriva and the average unit fares presented in Table 25. A subset of the three first months of 2017 data was used to ensure the estimation represents the most recent data. The result is illustrated in Figure 73.
- 5.2.30. Figure 73 highlights that more than half of the P&R users benefit from a concessionary fare (i.e. ENCTS) and therefore travel in off-peak hours. It also highlights that “return off peak” fares are used by 24% of the passengers. Thus, only 22% of passengers potentially use the P&R site during the peak period. This figure is in line with results of the online survey and MBC P&R car counts.

Figure 73 – Estimated market share per tickets type (by passenger trips)



User/non-user surveys – key points

- 5.2.31. MBC ran an online survey in 2017 through their website. 1500 responses were received and some paper surveys of users were conducted. The sample is therefore mostly representative of the online respondents. Below are listed the main findings from both users and non-users.
- 5.2.32. User survey findings:
- 29% of users use P&R sites fairly regularly (e.g. 3 or more days per week);
 - 20% of users travel to town in the morning peak period (before 9am);
 - The users mostly travel to the P&R site alone or with one passenger;
 - 85% of the users describe the service as good or better;
 - 53% of the users would drive if P&R was not available, while 18% would not come to town;
 - There is an impression that using P&R is “cheaper” than driving;
 - Users are mostly (89%) satisfied by the service;
 - The main reasons stated for using the P&R service are;
 - Dislike of driving;
 - Price of the service;
 - Other Public transport options are not available from the journey start point.
- 5.2.33. Non-user findings
- Most of the non-users who completed the survey were aware of the availability of P&R services;
 - 59% of non-users use their own car to reach the town centre;
 - The reasons for driving into town were:
 - poor alternative options using public transport; and
 - difficulty to carry large bags in buses;
 - 60% of non-users said they are unlikely to use P&R services in the future, while 14% may be encouraged if buses were more frequent;
 - Suggestions to improve the service included;
 - Charging by car rather than passenger;
 - Increasing the parking cost in town;
 - Expanding the service hours in the evenings and on Sundays;
 - Introducing more sites such as the former Armstrong Road site or south of town;
 - Negative perceptions about the service included;
 - Congestion around the sites;
 - Lack of bus lanes or cycle paths.

5.3 CLOSURE OF SITTINGBOURNE ROAD SITE

- 5.3.1. The Sittingbourne Road site was opened in 1998 and located to the northeast of the town centre in close proximity to Junction 7 of the M20. It contained 610 spaces and a dedicated bus service which allowed passengers to reach the town in approximately 6 minutes.
- 5.3.2. Surveys from the JMP parking study data report in 2011 recorded around 300 vehicles parked at 9:30 am on weekdays, with lower usage on Saturday and indicated weekday commuters were mostly using the P&R service. The maximum utilisation was recorded on Tuesday (local market day in Maidstone) at 12:30pm and showed 67% maximum occupation rate.

- 5.3.3. Overall, JMP surveys in 2011 demonstrated that a total of over 600 vehicles were parked in all P&R sites in the morning peak hour, thus reducing the traffic into town by a significant number of vehicles. Half of them used the Sittingbourne Road P&R site.
- 5.3.4. About 40% of the total Maidstone P&R capacity was utilised in peak hours while there was around a third of the overall town centre parking still available at the busiest time of the week.
- 5.3.5. Sittingbourne Road P&R was closed in February 2016 due to the lease on the site coming to an end and was not able to be replaced.
- 5.3.6. Figure 74 illustrates the change in patronage on route 501 before and after the Sittingbourne Road P&R site closure. Weekly passenger averages before and after the closure show an increase of 23% on route 501. This increase is observed immediately from the week starting the 6 February 2016, thus indicating that the increase is due to the closure of the Sittingbourne Road site, as no other event is known to have happened which would have caused such an increase in demand at Willington Street..
- 5.3.7. The same analysis on route 503, presented in Figure 75, shows an increase of 1% which is probably due to general growth rather than the Sittingbourne Road site closure, although the relative ease of access from the M20, compared to Willington Street may attract some users.

Figure 74 – Demand on service 501 before and after Sittingbourne Road P&R closure

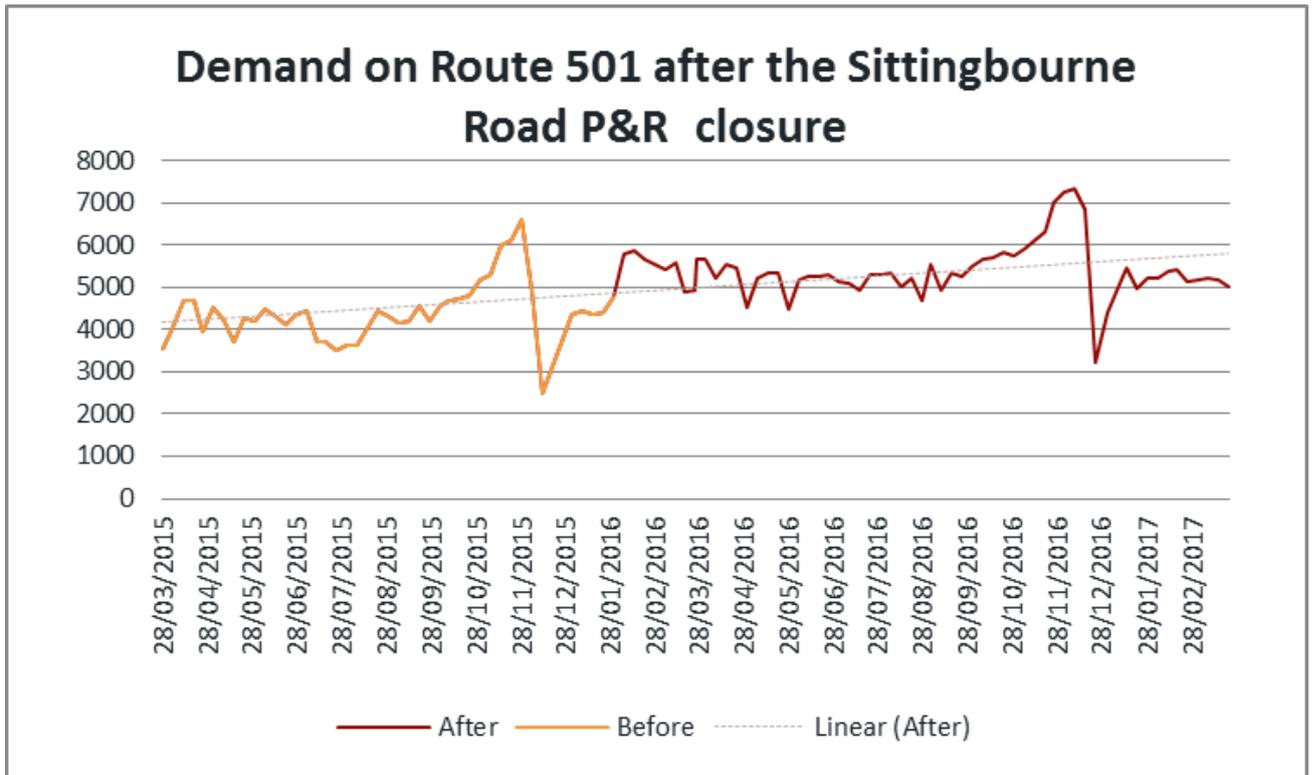
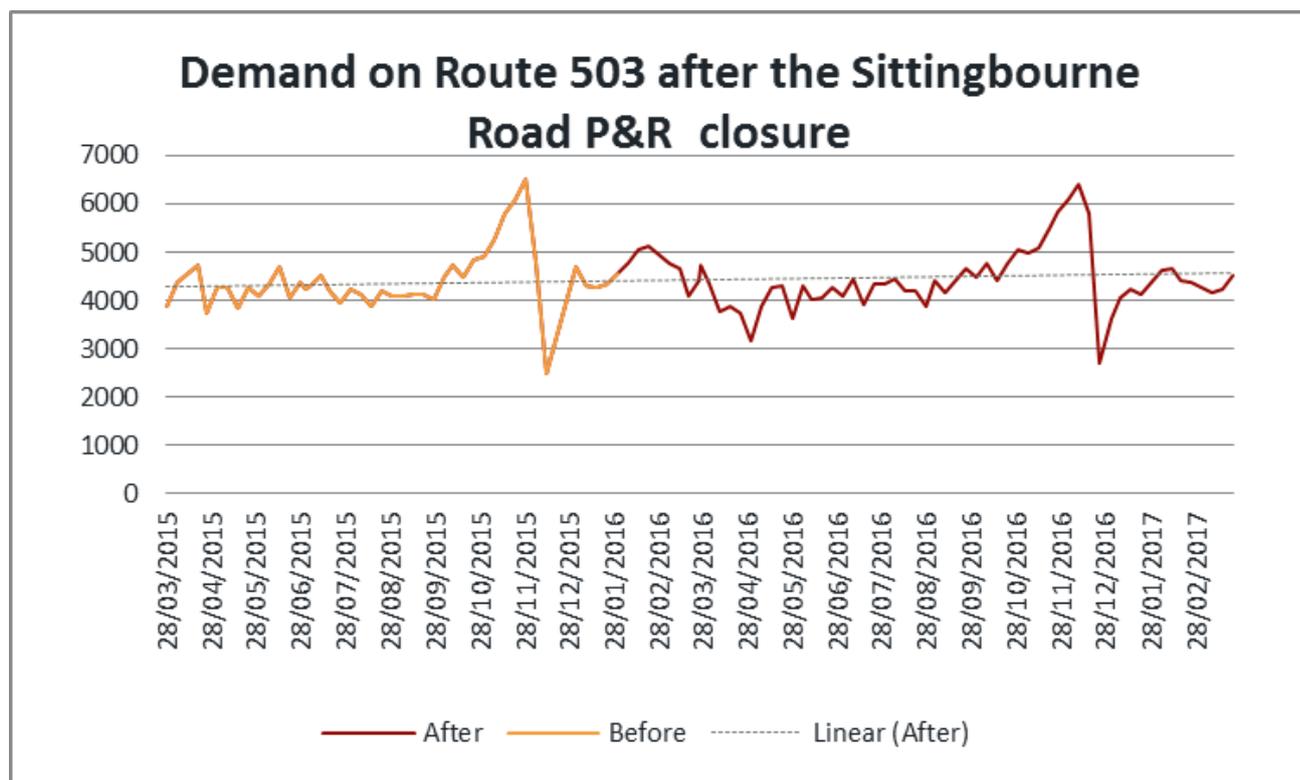


Figure 75 – Patronage on Route 503 before/after the Sittingbourne Road P&R site closure



5.3.8. Based on the patronage figures, it is reasonable to assume that the Sittingbourne Road P&R site closure lead to an increase in use of the Willington Street P&R Site, amounting to around 23% percent. Assuming the number of vehicles parked in Willington Street P&R in the morning peak is 148, it is projected that 28 of them have transferred from the Sittingbourne Road P&R, and would only represent around 10% of the previous demand.

5.3.9. Table 27 summarises the overall impact of closing Sittingbourne Road P&R Site:

Table 27 - Overall impact of the Sittingbourne Road P&R site closure

		London Road	Willington Street	Sittingbourne Road	Total
Before	P&R P&R spaces	518	400	610	1528
	Cars parked in peak	118	120	300	538
After	P&R P&R spaces	518	400	0	918
	Cars parked in peak	119	148	0	267
Difference	% Cars parked in Peak	101%	123%	-	50%
	Cars parked in peak	1	28	-300	-271

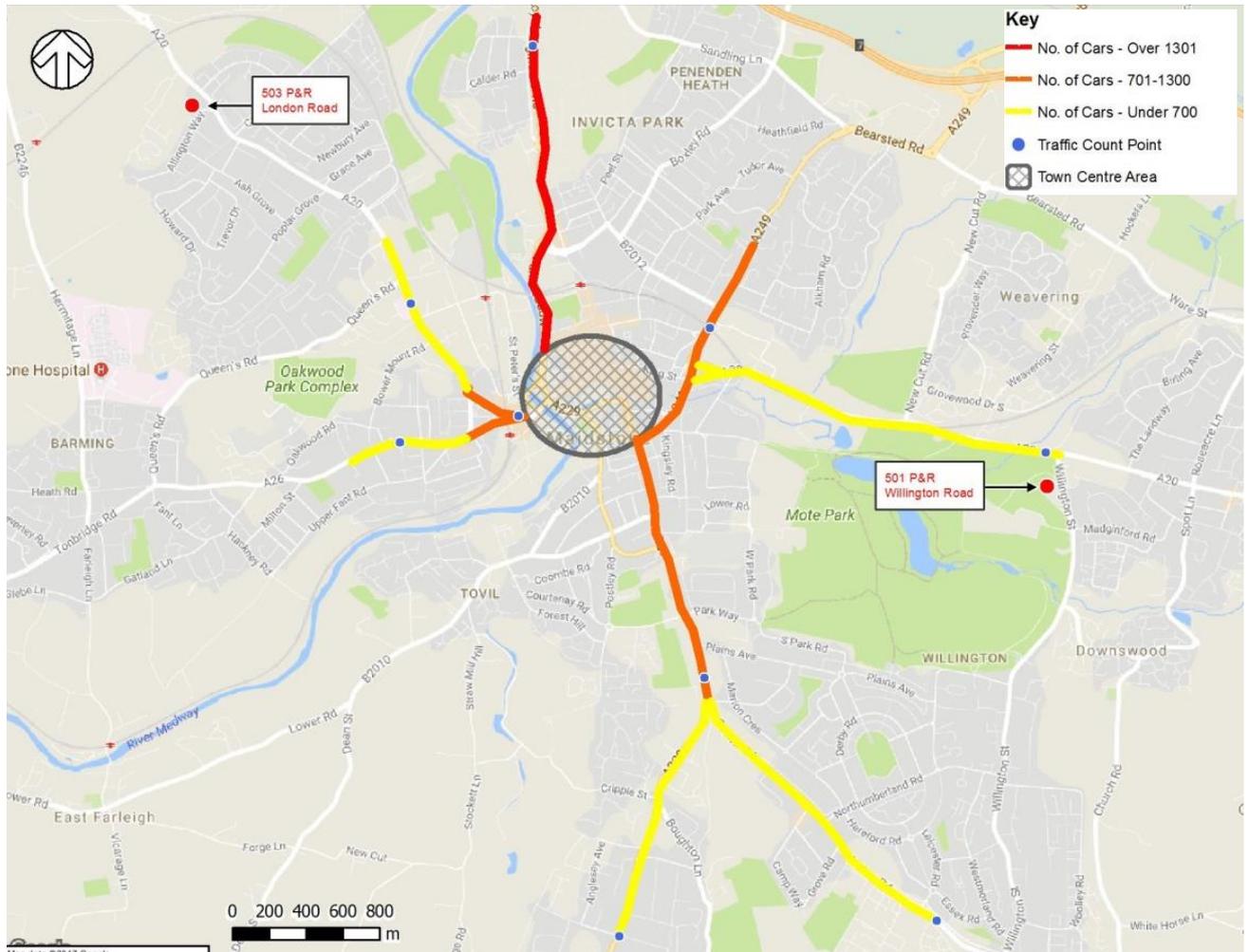
5.3.10. The overall impact of the closure of Sittingbourne Road P&R site was to reduce the number of P&R parking spaces by 610, leaving 918 spaces available, and to reduce the overall number of cars parked during the peak by 50%.

5.3.11. It is estimated that the closure lead to a reduction of 271 cars parked in the morning peak hours and a large proportion of these may now be parking in the town centre, while 28 users have transferred their vehicles to the Willington road site.

5.4 MAJOR TRAFFIC FLOWS

- 5.4.1. There are eight main radial routes that lead into Maidstone Town Centre. The A20 (east), A229 (north), A249, and A20 (west) provide access from Junctions 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the M20 to the north of the town. The A274, A229, and B2010 provide access from the south, whilst the A26 provides access from the west. All these routes gradually meet, at a series of key junctions, as they approach the town centre before joining the central one-way gyratory system around the town centre.
- 5.4.2. The Department for Transport traffic count database was interrogated to understand traffic flows into Maidstone town centre in peak hours. The most recent traffic counts were retrieved for each corridor in the direction of the town centre and are presented in Figure 76.
- 5.4.3. The colour code demonstrates the relative importance of each corridor in terms of traffic volumes. The blue points illustrate the location of the “Count Points (CP)” where the surveys were taken, used to create the map. Some of the lines on the map illustrating the traffic volumes are extended past the CPs for legibility purposes.

Figure 76 – Main traffic flow corridors (Source DfT Traffic Counts)



- 5.4.4. Table 28 provides the specific values used to create the map and the dates of the surveys.

5.4.5. The A229 Southbound is shown to be the busiest road with over 1700 vehicles in the busiest time, followed by the A26/A20 junction (Tonbridge Road and London Road), and then the A229 Northbound and Sittingbourne Road. Some of these sites are not currently served by P&R services.

5.4.6. It would be worth investigating if there are opportunities for new P&R sites to cover these corridors in the longer-term.

Table 28 - Most recent traffic counts extracted from DfT Traffic Counts database

Count Point (CP)	Road	A_Junction	Name	Direction	Year	Cars (busiest peak hour)	P&R available
26818	A229	Sandling Road roundabout	A229 Southbound	S	2014	1757	No
74580	A20	A229 roundabout	A26/A20 (Tonbridge and London Rd)	E	2012	1113	Partially
46830	A229	A274	A229 Northbound (Loose and Sutton Road)	N	2011	985	No
16793	A249	A20 King Street	Sittingbourne Road	S	2008	859	No
26819	A229	Old Loose Hill	Loose Road*	N	2008	615	No
26291	A26	North St	Tonbridge Road**	E	2008	601	No
78251	A274	Bircholt Rd	Sutton road*	N	2008	601	No
16231	A20	St Laurence Avenue	London Road Southbound**	S	2012	546	Yes
78253	A20	A229	Ashford Road (Willington street)	W	2011	453	Yes

*Leads to 46830; ** Leads to 74580

5.5 MBC INTERNAL REVIEW FINDINGS

5.5.1. MBC internal review of Park and Ride aims to recommend options to improve Park and Ride services in the short and medium term. The review also includes the tender evaluation of the next Park and Ride bus contract.

5.5.2. The review is not yet finalised but early results have been shared by MBC at a member meeting on the 6th of November 2017.

5.5.3. The review is based on feedback from existing operation and multiples evidences collected by MBC in 2017 via online surveys, on road surveys and desktop analysis. It also includes financial modelling.

5.5.4. The findings from the online surveys related to fare and service suggested that:

- Users see frequencies and cheaper charges than town centre parking fare as the most important element for P&R success;
- Users will be willing to pay more for a more frequent service and expect to pay more for peak time travel;
- At least half of the users and a quarter of non-users would benefit from buses scheduled later in the evening;
- Changing the charging model is unlikely to increase significantly P&R usage;
- A low percentage of non-users are likely to shift to P&R if a group ticket was to be introduced; and
- A quarter of older users would stop using P&R if they had to pay to park, but about 70% of respondents thought that older users should be prepared to pay £1+.

5.5.5. The possible MBC recommendations to increase income and retain a similar amount of users are listed below:

- Continue pay to ride (concessionary fares still free);
- Harmonise peak and off-peak fare; and
- Introduce discounted group travel tickets.

5.5.6. Considering the tender returns, potential changes to charges and likely user behaviour derived from surveys; the early modelling results suggest that MBC could provide a comparable Park and Ride service within financial plans (includes MTFS £75K saving/additional income in 2019/20). This statement is likely to be confirmed after the completion of this Study.

5.6 SUMMARY OF BASELINE FINDINGS

5.6.1. Sections 2 and 3 reviewed in detail the existing policies, studies and current performance of existing P&R services. The main findings are summarised below, in no specific order of priority:

- Currently, it is estimated that over 267 vehicles are using P&R services during the peak hours, thus reducing traffic into Maidstone Town centre during the peak.
- It is estimated that half of the total P&R capacity is not in use on a regular basis, and more than 70% of the capacity is available at peak hours.
- In addition to spare capacity at peak times at the P&R sites, there is a large portion of parking in Maidstone town centre which is under-used.
- Although MBC, through the ITS, aims to increase the P&R offer in principle, there is no planned schemes to do so as the implementation plan for Linton Corner has been cancelled.
- In common with most UK schemes, the current P&R services do not cover their costs, and as such require funding from the local tax payer. This statement is purely financial and does not consider benefits for externalities such as a reduction in congestion, pollution and road accidents.
- Across both sites, the majority of P&R users are concession pass holders and thus they travel during off peak hours, while around 20% of the users are using the service in morning peak.
- The closure of the Sittingbourne Road P&R service created a net reduction of over 271 P&R users during the peak hour. A significant proportion of these users may be now using their car to reach Maidstone town centre while approximately 28 drivers have however transferred to the Willington Street P&R site after the closure of the Sittingbourne Road P&R site.
- Non-user surveys indicate that current hours of operation (in the evening), bus frequencies, journey time and low priced parking in the town centre are deterrents to further use of P&R services.
- The traffic road (A229) with the largest peak hour flow of vehicles into Maidstone town centre is not served by a P&R service.
- MBC internal study is not yet finalised but is likely to make recommendations intended to increase income and reduce cost, while retaining at least a similar amount of users.

5.7 SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

5.7.1. The outcome of the analysis clearly highlights some of the weaknesses of the current P&R services which could be resolved in the short-term. These include:

- Significant additional capacity available at both P&R sites in peak period;
- Only 20% of the users use the P&R service in morning peak hours; and
- Attractive competing parking offers exist in the town centre.

5.7.2. Ultimately, the main competitor to P&R is to drive and park in town. For the P&R option to become/remain competitive, MBC must ensure that the proposed service is quick, convenient, reliable, well publicised and competitively priced. Therefore, each of these aspects of the P&R service are reviewed to identify opportunities to:

- Reduce the generalised travel time;
- Improve convenience;
- Continue raising awareness;
- Review pricing strategies;
- Resolve town centre parking inadequacies; and
- Replace dedicated P&R bus services by existing urban bus services.

REDUCTION OF GENERALISED TRAVEL TIME

5.7.3. The generalised travel time of a P&R user is split into different elements:

- Car journey time;
- Parking time;
- Time waiting for the bus;
- Bus ride time;
- Time to reach final destination.

5.7.4. Each of these elements needs to be optimised to reduce the travel time to a minimum and render the service attractive to potential users. A high level review of individual factors is presented in Table 29.

Table 29 - Review of individual travel time element

	Duration	Comments
Car journey time	Depends on origin	Difficult to reduce as car journey at that stage are mixed with general traffic.
Parking time	1 min(nominal)	Optimised as current sites have spare capacity so easy to park.
Time waiting for the bus	0 to 20 min 10 min Average	This can have a significant impact on the overall travel time and most P&R schemes operate at every 15 minutes (or more frequently).
Bus boarding/ride time	9 min / 6min	This could be improved by further bus priorities, if feasible. However, since there are already fairly extensive bus priorities on the alignment (where road width permits separate lanes), it is unlikely to achieve significant savings in journey time on more constrained sections of highway.
Time to reach final destination	3 min (nominal)	Optimised with P&R services stopping at the main locations in the town centre, for example walk from say the High Street (The Cannon Stop T) to Fremlin Walk Shopping Centre

5.7.5. Reducing waiting times could significantly impact the overall travel time. This could be implemented via increased frequencies, e.g. increasing headways to 15 minutes (i.e. 4 services per hour) would reduce the waiting time by 2.5 minutes, from 10 to 7.5 minutes. Increasing the frequency to 10 minutes will reduce the waiting time by half, to 5 minutes.

5.7.6. A benchmarking exercise of P&R services in other towns and cities in the south east of England demonstrates that higher service frequencies are generally provided (Table 30), with a minimum service level of 15 minutes to 7.5 minutes.

Table 30 - P&R service comparison

	Maidstone	Canterbury	Winchester	Guildford
Frequency	Every 20 minutes from 7am to 6:30pm	Monday to Saturday: Buses run every 8 minutes, from 7am to 7:30pm - lower frequencies on Sunday	Every 7 to 10 minutes during peak times depending on sites - from 6:30am to 7:30pm	Every 12 to 15 minutes during peak times, Monday to Saturday, from 7.30am to 7.30pm depending on services
Parking access	open at 6.30am and locked at 6.40pm	No entry in car park after 8.30pm but exit any time		
Maximum length of stay		Maximum stay 48 hours		

IMPROVE CONVENIENCE:

Service Level

- 5.7.7. Parking in town is flexible, whereas the P&R service needs to be timed around the bus schedule, currently every 20 minutes. A more frequent service would allow users more flexibility and significantly reduce the end to end journey time into town, making the service more attractive as discussed in the previous section.
- 5.7.8. Hours of operation may also impact the number of potential users, whereas early closure would lead to a commuter running the risk of missing the last bus. This point was also raised through the MBC online surveys. The last bus trips leaving the main town centre stops are currently timed at 6:14pm (route 501) and 6:19pm (route 503), and may act as a deterrent for some people who may need to work late, attend a social event or work shifts. Solutions could involve by:
- Adding extra bus trips leaving the town centre toward the P&R sites; and
 - Leaving the P&R site open at night so potential late commuters can still access their car, should they miss the last P&R bus (e.g. for London Road could catch a public bus or have a short taxi journey).
- 5.7.9. The benchmarking exercise presented in Table 30 demonstrates that the services are generally available until 7:30pm.

Additional Destinations

- 5.7.10. Suggestions were made by MBC to create additional bus stops on the P&R services targeting large trip generators such as large employment zones or interchanges, near the existing P&R bus service routeing. Three locations were identified: Turkey Mill, Maidstone Hospital and Kent County Council offices (County Hall).

5.7.11. Potential solutions were studied for the three locations and presented in **Table 31**:

Table 31: Potential new stops investigation

Suggested new stops	Description	Requirement in P&R services and Impact	Recommendations
Turkey Mill	Turkey Mill business park is located 1.5 miles South East of Maidstone town centre and is home to over 75 businesses accommodated in 100,000 sq ft of offices. There are over 700 car parking spaces and parts of the grounds are exclusively leased to The Orangery Maidstone Ltd, operators of a wedding and conference venue.	Stop on route at existing urban network stops - Stopping there may add maximum one minute to the existing P&R Bus Service and is feasible within existing resources.	Turkey Mill Business Park has large parking facilities (700 parking spaces), thus it is unlikely this parking is full on a daily basis, but it is possible that the parking is full when large events occur. Also this site probably generates some trips to the town centre across the day. It is recommended to add a new stop on the main road adjacent to Turkey Mill for the P&R service.
County Hall	County Hall (and associated office buildings) is located close to Maidstone East Railway Station, and is one of the largest employers in the Town Centre. It is also around 7 minutes' walk from the Town Centre P&R bus stops and car parking for visitors is very limited.	Serving County Hall would require a significant diversion for either of the existing P&R bus routes and based on existing bus running times is estimated to add around 15 minutes to the round trip journey time, thus requiring additional vehicle and driver resources.	This suggestion will increase the cost of P&R services and require additional resources. While this is not recommended if both P&R site remain open, it could be recommended as a Terminus should only one P&R site be in operation (subject to further investigation to ensure it could be accommodated within vehicle resource).
Maidstone Hospital	Maidstone Hospital is a large hospital located in Hermitage Lane. Parking is available on site but is often fully occupied.	The P&R services would need either a diversion or an extension of 7 minutes each way to serve the hospital site. This would require at least one extra vehicle in the cycle, and is likely to impact badly on punctuality, as it uses congested roads.	It is not recommended to serve the Hospital with P&R buses, however, it is recommended that MBC could discuss with the hospital the possibility to sublet some of the parking available at the London P&R site to the Hospital for overflow parking or staff parking. The hospital would then be responsible for providing its own transport between the car park site and the Hospital.

Mode of payment

5.7.12. Mode of payment: at the moment cash and mobile ticketing are accepted on buses, but not debit cards. This may be a deterrent for new users who may not necessarily carry cash with them and can also be an impediment to existing users. Accepting card payments on P&R buses would make the service more convenient for a large portion of users and may also create an opportunity to attract new users.

INCREASE AWARENESS

5.7.13. Continuous publicity and marketing: It is important to continuously remind users and new inhabitants of the availability of P&R services in order to encourage their use. Clearly, advertisements should emphasise the service strengths such as CCTV security, low cost parking for the whole day, multiple dropping points in town and continuous review of services.

5.7.14. The existing P&R sites are sign-posted from the nearest junctions on the M20 but MBC could develop a P&R app in order to engage better with existing and potential users.

REVIEW P&R PRICING STRATEGY

- 5.7.15. Table 32 illustrates the pricing of P&R services in benchmarked towns and cities. It appears that the cost of using the P&R service is cheaper than average in Maidstone. It is also important to note that Maidstone is the only city where ENCTS passholders can use the service for free.

Table 32 - P&R tariff benchmark

	Maidstone	Canterbury	Winchester	Guildford
Pricing	Adult peak return £2.60, off-peak £1.60 Discounts on multiple regular ticket purchase	Tickets are £3 for a car and up to six people, or just £1 if you park after 4:00 pm	£3 all day - £2.50 off peak for one car up to 6 passengers Discounts on multiple regular ticket purchase	Pay to travel into Guildford on the bus - Adult day return £2.40- Discounts on multiple regular ticket purchase
ENCTS applicable	Free	Ride for free but have to pay for parking	May use the P&R bus free of charge after 9:30 am but should pay the appropriate parking fee.	£1 day return, all day

- 5.7.16. The current P&R pricing strategy focuses on charging per bus passenger, thus it is advantageous for cars with only one driver. In the case of multi car occupancy, it becomes more advantageous to use town centre parking which would cost the same as three peak passengers return P&R tickets.
- 5.7.17. With a current average number of passengers per car of 1.27 in the morning peak and 1.59 in the off-peak, it is estimated that each car parked results in a revenue of between £2.50 and £2.60. Therefore, paying to park rather than paying to ride with a fare of £3 may become more expensive for a significant number of people who use the service in the peak period.

Table 33 - Assessed current revenue per car

	Pax per car	Estimated current revenue per car	Comments
Before 9 am	1.27	£2.60	assumed £1.03 per trip (10 singles)
After 10 am	1.59	£2.50	assumed £0.80 per trip (10 singles)

- 5.7.18. As part of the internal review, MBC is currently undertaking a financial modelling exercise which also suggest that paying to park rather than paying to ride would not improve the revenue significantly, while potentially increasing the requirement for bus capacity.
- 5.7.19. Concessionary fare: Those using the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) bus pass are estimated to represent over 50% of P&R users. For each trip made by a concessionary user, it is estimated that MBC receive £0.41, or £0.82 per return trip from KCC.
- 5.7.20. A suggestion from the survey has been made to charge those currently using the ENCTS scheme £1 per return trip, and this has been investigated. This would require the Park & Ride service to be outside the ENCTS and thus remove compensatory payments from KCC. Based on an assumption that there would be a reduction of 25% in the number of users due to increased overall cost (25% was estimated based on user surveys and experience), it appears that this would generate around £101,900. However there would be a reduction in revenue from KCC of approximately £111,700. It would lead to a net reduction of £10,000 as it would have to replace the concessionary reimbursement (Figure 24).
- 5.7.21. An alternative approach would be to charge ENCTS pass holders £1 to park their car. This approach could lead to an estimated reduction of 16% of the users. It would nevertheless raise around £57,600 of parking fare whilst retaining the ENCTS payments from KCC, generating an estimated extra £40,000 per year overall. However this would not be practical to enforce and would risk the charge of being discriminatory.

5.7.22. It is not recommended that any of these suggestions should be pursued.

Table 34 - Potential concessionary fare change

per annum	Current	ENCTS £1 per return trip*	ENCTS £1 per car parked**	Comments
Estimated ENCTS pax trips 2016/2017	271,817	203,863	229,078	*Estimated decrease of 25% of passenger trips for introducing £1 return fare for ENTC (based on results of MBC online surveys and experience)
Estimated number of car	85,477	64,108	72,037	**Estimated decrease of 16% of car demand based on corresponding average fare of 0.63 per passenger (£1/15.9=£0.63)
Estimated revenue from Kent	£111,715	-	£94,150	Based on 2016/17 statement
Estimated revenue from ENCTS bus fare	-	£101,931	-	
Estimated revenue from ENCTS car parking fare	-	-	£57,629	Car park fares are subject to VAT (20%)
Average fare collected per ENCTS users	£0.82	£1.00	£1.33	
Total revenue	£111,715	£101,931	£151,780	
Change in revenue	-	-£9,784	£40,064	
Change in revenue (%)	100%	91%	136%	

5.7.23. It should be noted that it is in theory possible to exclude P&R services from being covered by ENCTS, however this depends on the fare for the service including a special 'amenity' element which makes the fare significantly high in relation to the general level of fares for comparable journeys. As the current P&R fare is lower than comparable bus fares from the P&R sites into the Town Centre, this exemption would not be applicable. It also possible to exclude services from ENCTS if they are primarily aimed at tourism, however this definition would also not apply to P&R in Maidstone.

5.7.24. The P&R "off peak fare" is reasonably low and believed to be one of the lowest in the south east of England. The MBC internal study is considering the recommendation suggesting the harmonisation of Peak and off peak fares by increasing the off peak fares to the peak level. Based on the online survey results this should not impact significantly the number of off peak users since the tariff would remain competitive when compared with town centre parking.

REVIEW PARKING PRICING STRATEGY AND SPACE AVAILABLE

5.7.25. The main alternative to P&R is to drive and park in the town centre. One of the most targeted markets for P&R should be commuters who need long stay parking. For these especially, the current cost of parking in Maidstone town centre will be between £6 and £12, depending on the location.

5.7.26. The basic return P&R ticket currently costs £2.60 which is roughly a third of the parking cost. Therefore the price of P&R is reasonably attractive at face value. Furthermore, there are some additional discounts for regular P&R users.

5.7.27. Section 4.13 describes the current car parking occupancy profiles which demonstrates an oversupply of parking with peak accumulation amounting to some 68% of supply. This excess of parking must be considered when progressing the P&R strategy.

5.7.28. Ideally, the parking strategy should also encourage commuters to park on the outskirts of town by reducing the number of parking spaces available for long stay parking. This could be done by implementing soft parking pricing changes:

- Reducing the maximum parking period to discourage long stays;
- Reducing the number of parking spaces available to commuters by increasing the number of resident parking spaces;
- Reviewing travel plans and the provision of parking with the main town centre employers; and
- Reducing the town centre parking space supply.

REPLACE DEDICATED P&R BUS SERVICES BY URBAN BUS SERVICES

5.7.29. Replacing existing dedicated P&R bus services with existing urban bus services has been reviewed, since both sites are located near a bus corridor.

5.7.30. The review confirmed the conclusions previously reach by MBC that:

- The services near Willington road are too few, not equally spaced and not close enough to provide an attractive service for P&R. Furthermore the service would probably require a small diversion since the site is approximately a 400 meter walk from the bus stops on the A20.
- While the services close to London Road are reasonably frequent, serving the P&R site would necessitate a small diversion of the current bus routeing, thus increasing travel time for existing passengers (See Table 36).

Table 35 - Bus services near Willington Street P&R site

Bus Routes	Peak Hour Frequency
9	30 mins
10X	60 mins

Table 36 - Bus services near London Road P&R site

Routes	Peak Hour Frequency
71	Combined 10 minutes
72	
79A	4 journeys

5.8 FUTURE P&R STRATEGY

5.8.1. Different strategies have been investigated in respect of the long-term requirement for P&R services:

- Introduction of micro P&R sites;
- Introduction of new P&R sites; and
- Closure of existing P&R sites.

MICRO P&R

5.8.2. The “Micro P&R” concept involves optimising the use of existing resources such as small parking sites and corresponding high frequency bus routes to provide small P&R sites. Where feasible this means that no dedicated bus services are provided but only marketing is required, thus significantly reducing operational costs of the P&R service.

5.8.3. A three step approach was undertaken to identify potential locations for Micro P&R sites:

- Comprehensive review of main traffic corridors and matching frequent bus services (every 20 minutes or more);
- Identification of potential existing parking areas along the frequent bus routes, via site visits; and
- Recommendation on feasibility of sites based on observation and operational requirements.

5.8.4. Table 37 summarises bus routes serving the main traffic corridors and the frequencies of each matching bus service. Bus routes with frequencies of 20 minutes or more (numbers 82, 85, 101, 71/72, 3, 7 and 89) are highlighted in bold.

Table 37: Traffic Corridor and Bus routes frequencies (source Arriva summary of services)

Corridors	Route	Peak headway
A274 Sutton road	82	10 min
	12	30 min
	13	6 jyns
	24	1 jyns
A229 Loose (S)	5	Hourly
	27	3 jyns
	28	-
	59	3 jyns
Shepway	85	10 min
	4	Hourly
A20 Willington Street (E)	9	30 min
	10x	Hourly
A 249 Sittingbourne Road	501	20 min
	333	Hourly
	334	Hourly
	335	Weekend only
Boxley Road	9	30 min
	130	8 jyns
	131	2 jyns
	79	30 min
A229 Fairmeadow (N)	88	1-2 jyns
	101	12 min
	150	Two Hourly
	155	Hourly
A20 London road (W)	X1	Hourly
	71	10 to 20 min
	72	30 min
	79A	4 jyns
A26 Tonbridge Road	503	20 min
	3	20 min
	66	Hourly
	7	20 min
B2010 Dean Street	78	4 jyns
	88	1-2 jyns
	23	Hourly
	25	Hourly

5.8.5. Each service routeing was then visited to identify potential parking locations suitable for Micro P&R sites. Suitable locations should provide:

- Safe and easy access to Bus stops in both directions;
- No change to existing bus routes (or only minor amendments); and
- Attractive journey times.

5.8.6. Site visits confirmed that there are no MBC car parks along the frequent bus routes. Therefore only commercial car parking has been identified. Potential implementation would be subject to, among other considerations, the limited number of spaces, any planning constraints and commercial terms with the site manager/owner. Table 38 summarises each route and the corresponding recommendations following the site visits and assessment of operational feasibility.

Table 38 - Routes and recommendation for Micro P&R

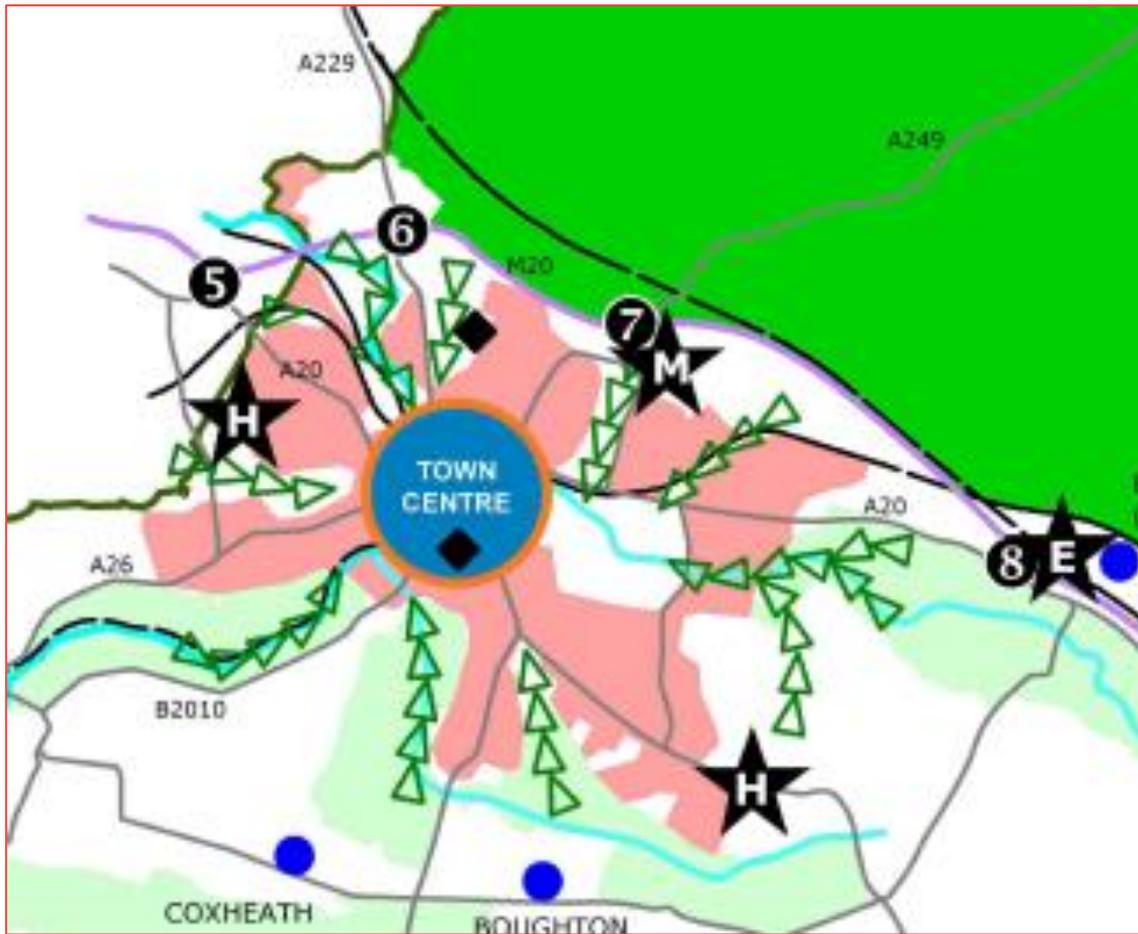
Service	Route	Daytime Frequency	Existing car parks on route	Comment	Recommendation
101 Sapphire	Maidstone - Springfield - Horsted - Huntsman's Corner - Chatham - Gillingham	12 minutes	No car parks directly on route (although Village Hotel is very close at J6)	101 operates direct via Chatham Road and does not serve the Running Horse stops therefore to do so would require a diversion which would work against the route's intended directness	Not feasible
82	Park Wood - Sutton Road - Maidstone	10 minutes	Morrisons (Nottingham Avenue)	Main road into town and some bus priority further along Sutton Road so has some merit	Possible
85	Senacre Wood - Shepway - Maidstone	10 minutes	Maidstone Leisure Centre	As West Park Road is not a key radial route into town, it would be a substantial diversion for any longer distance car trips and potentially generate (unnecessary) short distance car trips from Senacre Wood/Shepway	Not feasible
89	Maidstone - Loose - Coxheath -	20 minutes	None	Old Loose Hill is a small parallel road which may already accommodate some informal free parking but as it would be on-street, any promotion of this would probably be sensitive with residents	Not feasible
7	Maidstone - Watringbury - Hadlow - Tonbridge - Southborough - Tunbridge Wells	20 minutes	None		N/A
71	Maidstone - London Road - Allington - Larkfield - Lunsford Park	10 – 20 minutes	(London Road P&R) Poppyfields Public House (Coldharbour Roundabout)	Services 71 and 72 provide a combined 10 minute frequency but this is already the P&R route so no justification for any micro P&R on same corridor. Additionally, the bus stops are not very close to the Poppyfields PH.	Not feasible
72	Maidstone - London Road - Allington - Larkfield - East Malling - West Malling - King's Hill	30 minutes	Mid-Kent Shopping Centre (close by but would need a diversion which would be unattractive and require additional resource)		

- 5.8.7. Only one site is therefore considered as even feasible as a potential location for a micro P&R. This would involve the use of Morrison's supermarket car park at Nottingham Avenue/Sutton Road and the use of bus route 82, which runs every 10 minutes. No assessment has been made regarding the amount of surplus parking that might be available, nor whether Morrison's would be willing to permit such parking.
- 5.8.8. Further analysis highlighted that the estimated travel time by bus for this micro P&R journey would be around 20 minutes compared to a 10 minute car journey. In terms of fares, the £5.20 return fare will not be particularly attractive compared to the cheapest parking in town for the day, which costs around £6. Therefore, it has been concluded that both fares and travel times are too high to provide a reasonable alternative at this location.
- 5.8.9. Consequently, the option of Micro P&R sites in Maidstone does not appear to be feasible currently.

NEW P&R SITES

- 5.8.10. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan sets out growth plans between 2011-2031 to make provision through the granting of planning permissions and the allocation of sites for:
- 17,660 new dwellings;
 - 39,830m² floorspace for office use;
 - 20,290m² floorspace for industrial use;
 - 49,911m² floorspace for warehousing use;
 - 100,000m² floorspace for medical use;
 - 6,100m² floorspace for retail use (convenience goods); and
 - 23,700m² floorspace for retail use (comparison goods).
- 5.8.11. More specifically, the plans include 1,846 new dwellings, 11,400m² of retail floorspace, 6,000m² of employment floorspace as part of Maidstone urban area via SP1 to the north-west and the south-east.
- 5.8.12. This scale of development will further increase traffic flows and pressurise the existing transport network during peak periods. Delays are likely to impact all road users and could further impact the attractiveness of the town centre. The overall plans for Maidstone urban area are presented in Figure 77.

Figure 77 – Map of Maidstone development (SP1)



- 5.8.13. Based on the traffic flow analysis carried out in section 3, and considering that the Strategic Development Locations are on the edge of the current urban area, to the north-west (policy SP2) and the south-east (policy SP3), the following sites were identified as potential locations for further P&R sites:

Table 39 – Potential P&R Sites

	Potential new site	Feasibility
A229 Southbound	Invicta Park Barracks site - A229	Large site (41ha) located north of Maidstone at the crossing of the A229 and Sandling Lane. It is currently used as an Army Installation. The Ministry of Defence announced that the site would close in 2027. Redevelopment of this site is expected to be mixed-use and could accommodate facilities for P&R which could cater for the main traffic corridor in Maidstone A229 (Policy H2). This location already benefits from a roundabout which could facilitate access to the site.
Sittingbourne Road	Former Sittingbourne P&R site	It is not feasible to reinstitute the old Sittingbourne Road P&R Site because the site rent is too high and it is understood that the site is now planned for redevelopment.
Sutton Road	Parkwood / Sutton Road	The bus journey time for this location is around 30 minutes, while the car journey time is estimated around 15 minutes. Thus the P&R option would not be attractive. A P&R in this location is likely to attract similar numbers of users as London Road or Willington Street. Thus the business case is highly unlikely to stand on its own.
Loose Road	Former Armstrong Road site	This site was suggested as an alternative from the non-user survey suggestions. However the suggested site has now been redeveloped after the closure of the old P&R site.

- 5.8.14. Based on existing data, P&R performance and borough aspirations, any potential new P&R sites need to be financially sustainable to succeed.
- 5.8.15. Lessons learnt from both Willington Street and London Road P&R sites suggest that on average 26% of the busiest peak hour flow can be realistically targeted as potential users based on current P&R fares, which are relatively low.
- 5.8.16. A traffic volume of between 400 and 600 vehicles per hour in peak hours does not generate enough revenue to cover the operation of a 20 minute frequency P&R service. Thus a corridor with significantly higher traffic flows should be considered.
- 5.8.17. A high level estimation based on current usage and traffic flow indicates that peak capacity for a traffic volume like the one observed on the A229 would require a minimum of 460 spaces in peak hours and a maximum of 800 spaces all together, as set out in Table 40.

Table 40 - P&R capacity requirement

	Traffic volumes	pk occupancy	% off peak	% off peak design	% off peak design
Willington St	453	148	248	33%	55%
London Road	546	114	210	21%	38%
Total	999	262	458	26%	46%
A229 (N)	1757	461	806	26%	46%

- 5.8.18. Based on the above observations, it become apparent that an additional P&R site is likely to be required on the A229 corridor.
- 5.8.19. The existing site in Invicta Park is potentially worth considering, as the major highway infrastructure is already in place to provide access to the site, without requiring major capital expenditure.

- 5.8.20. The proximity to the town centre could be an advantage as the site could be expanded from a P&R site to a “Park and Choose” site and provide options for users to walk or cycle into town, or indeed use the high frequency existing bus service (101 Sapphire). It should however also be noted that the proximity to the town centre may limit the appeal of the site as car drivers would perceive that they are nearly in the town centre and thus not wish to transfer for the short remaining distance and thus further detailed modelling of the site would be required in order to develop a business case for it.
- 5.8.21. The implementation of a P&R service in Invicta Park would fulfil policy aspiration H2 to enhance walking, cycling and public transport connections to the town centre and the local area.

CLOSING EXISTING P&R SITES ANALYSIS

- 5.8.22. Some consideration has been given to closing one or both the existing P&R sites. Multiple scenarios have been defined and an outline assessment conducted of:
- Base Case: Do Nothing
 - Sc1: Close London Road, keep Willington Street
 - Sc2: Close Willington Street, keep London Road
 - Sc3: Close both sites

Assumptions

- 5.8.23. It has been necessary to make some assumptions to estimate the potential impact of closing one or both of the existing P&R sites.
- 5.8.24. **Cost:** Existing cost of running both sites including the bus services is currently £584,000 per year. While a part of this cost is linked to the maintenance of the P&R parking provision, the total cost is mainly driven by the operational cost of the dedicated bus service. This cost has been estimated based on the Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) number to operate dedicated bus routes in all scenarios. PVRs have been calculated based on the existing running time in peak periods.
- 5.8.25. **Revenue:** The current revenue generated by both P&R sites is £342,000. While a small part of the revenue is derived from rental, the majority of it is generated by the fares paid on the bus. Based on the existing revenue generated, the split below has been assumed:

Table 41 – P&R Revenue Split

	Willington Street P&R	London Road P&R
Revenue breakdown	56%	44%

- 5.8.26. **User transfer:** The existing P&R sites are geographically opposed with London Road in the North West and Willington Street in the South East. Thus it is not expected that users will transfer from one site to the other should one or other of the sites be closed.
- 5.8.27. **Impact on traffic and air quality:** Petrol and diesel-engined motor vehicles emit a wide variety of pollutants, principally carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulate matter (PM₁₀), which have an increasing impact on urban air quality. The impact on air quality is assumed to be proportional to the expected change of traffic volumes on the roads surrounding the town centre.

Results

5.8.28. The Table 42 presents the results of the evaluations.

Table 42 – P&R site closure analysis

Estimates based on assumptions described above	Existing		Close Willington St	Close London Road	Close both
	London Road	Willington Street			
Car park spaces	518	400	518	400	-918
Cars parked in peak	114	148	114	148	-262
Maximum cars parked	210	248	210	248	-458
Cost (per annum)	£ 584,000		£ 389,000	£ 389,000	-£584,000
Revenue (per annum)	£ 342,000		£ 150,000	£ 191,000	-£ 342,000
Shortfall (per annum)	-£ 242,000		-£ 239,000	-£ 198,000	-
Additional Car Park Revenue from Town Centre Car Parks (per annum)	£ -		£ 140,000	£ 120,000	£ 260,000
Remaining shortfall	-£ 242,000		-£ 99,000	-£ 78,000	-
Buses Required	3		2	2	-
Service Frequency	3		4	4	-

- 5.8.29. **Scenario 1: Close Willington Street:** While the current shortfall in revenue over costs is c.£240,000 per year, the evaluation demonstrates that closure of Willington Street P&R would result in a marginal reduction in the shortfall (£3,000 per year). If combined with the potential extra parking revenue generated by the displacement of car parking to the town centre, the shortfall is reduced to c.£100,000 per year.
- 5.8.30. **Scenario 2: Close London Road:** While the current shortfall in revenue over costs is c.£240,000 per year, the evaluation demonstrates that closure of London Road P&R would result in a reduction in the shortfall by £44,000 per year, which is significantly higher than the figure for Willington Street but still a modest amount in context. If combined with the potential extra parking revenue generated by the displacement of car parking to the town centre, the shortfall is reduced to c.£80,000 per year.
- 5.8.31. **Scenario 3: close both P&R sites:** This scenario will result in a total saving of c.£240,000 to MBC. If combined with the potential extra revenue generated from a change in fare in town centre parking, the overall saving would reach £502,000 per year.
- 5.8.32. While the closure of one or the other of the P&R sites leads to some minor reduction in the financial shortfall of the P&R operation, closing the London Road site would be most beneficial financially and have the least detrimental effects to air quality and congestion.
- 5.8.33. Closing both sites may generate or otherwise release in the region of £500,000 per annum through a combination of parking revenue and saving of P&R subsidy.
- 5.8.34. This section has looked at the implications of maintaining or reducing P&R services in isolation. However, separate policy measures could also interact with P&R. In particular, as noted in section 4.23 a £0.10 increase in parking tariffs, ring-fenced to fund sustainable travel could generate £100,000 per year and the P&R shortfall could therefore be funded with an equivalent average £0.25 parking tariff uplift which is within the realms of what could be achieved simply by rebasing the current town centre car parking tariff as described in section 4.22.

5.9 REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

5.9.1. The analysis carried out during the P&R study has led to a number of recommendations which could improve the current P&R services. These are listed below:

- Retain the dedicated bus services to existing P&R sites;
- Stop P&R service 501 at Turkey Mill bus stop in both direction;
- Extend hours of operation of dedicated P&R services within existing resources, if possible;
- Review opportunities to keep the P&R car park open later in the evening at no additional cost;
- Continue to advertise and market the P&R services to existing and new users;
- Review the pricing strategy to increase revenue by harmonising the off peak fares (subject to the MBC final modelling results confirmation); and
- Reduce town centre parking availability to encourage weekday commuters to park outside the town centre. Such measures could include increasing the number of resident permit zones or shortening the maximum parking period.

5.9.2. It has also led to a range of more strategic suggestions which should be considered alongside the above recommendations and the town centre parking pricing strategy.

- Micro P&R does not appear to be viable at the moment unless new sites can be identified;
- If one P&R site were to be closed, it would be preferable to close London Road. Retaining Willington Street P&R in combination to increasing parking fare in Maidstone town centre could significantly reduce the current subsidy required to operate P&R;
- The past performance of Sittingbourne P&R site demonstrated a greater demand than for both existing P&R sites; thus a site near the former Sittingbourne P&R site location might be considered in the future;
- Introduction of a new P&R site directly north of Maidstone to cater for the A229 traffic would address the most heavily used corridor into the Town Centre. This could be envisaged in the Invicta Park site which is planned to be redeveloped within the Borough Local Plan time frame.



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Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There were 904 responses to the survey – 484 from service users and 420 from non-users. ➤ No weighting has been applied to the results. Groups where there are less than 10 respondents are not discussed in this summary. ➤ People from BME backgrounds are under-represented as users and non-users. ➤ 65 to 74 years old are over-represented – significantly so in the users group. ➤ 16 to 34 years group are significantly under-represented as users and non-users. 	
<p>Q1. Do you use the Park & Ride Service? Yes: 53.5% No: 46.5%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater proportion of women than men said they use the service at 59.6% compared to 49.5%. • The 75 years and over had the greatest proportion saying they use the service at 85.7% and the 35 to 44 years group had the lowest proportion saying they use the service at 41.7%
<p>Q2. How frequently would a bus need to depart in each direction, throughout the day, to meet your needs? Every 10 mins: 8.2% Every 15 mins: 23.8% Every 20 mins: 56.4% Other: 11.7%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of people traveling using a standard ticket and the majority of those traveling with an Older Person's bus pass said they need a bus to depart every 20 minutes. • The top response from those who use a ten trip ticket was every 15 minutes at 41.9%. • The majority of respondents using the service between 4 days a week and once a month said they need a bus to depart every 20 mins. • Respondents using the service five days a week or more were split. The top option from this group was 20 minutes at 38.5% followed by every 15 minutes at 34.6%.
<p>Q3. How often do you use the Park & Ride service? 5 or more days a week: 11.5% 3 to 4 days a week: 18.7% 2 days a week: 20.9% Once a week: 21.8% Once a fortnight: 9.9% Once a month: 8.4% Less often than once a month: 8.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 16 to 34 years group were most likely to be using the service five days a week or more, with 44.4% selecting this response. • 60% of ten trip ticket holders use the service five days a week or more and 31% of this group use the service three to four days a week. • More than three out four people using an Older Person's bus pass use the service at least once a week. • Those that travel early (before 9am) use the service more frequently than those that travel later, with 76% using the service at least three days a week.
<p>Q4. What sort of ticket do you tend to use for your journey? Standard Return Ticket: 31.7% Older Person's Bus Pass: 51.5% Disabled Person/Companion Bus Pass: 0.7% 10 Single Trip Ticket: 13.7% Season Ticket: 1.8% Other Bus Pass: 0.7%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data suggests that women are more likely than men to use the Ten Trip ticket with 18% using this ticket type compared to 7% of men. • 95% of respondent's age 65 years and over use an Older Person's bus pass on the P&R service. The majority traveling between into town between 9am and 12pm and out of town between 12pm and 2pm are using an Older Person's bus pass • Over 70% of people traveling five days a week or more use a ten trip pass. • The majority of those traveling before 9am use a ten trip ticket (62.5%) and almost one in four (24.0%) traveling at this time use a standard ticket.

<p>Q5a. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey at PEAK TIME (before 9am) if the bus frequency is: 20 mins</p> <p>£2.00: 49.4% £2.50: 24.0% £3.00: 21.7% £3.50: 1.8% £4.00: 3.1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all groups with at least 10 respondents £2.00 was the most common answer. The only exception was the 45 to 54 years group where both £2.00 and £2.50 had an equal number of respondents answering this way. • Across the different ticket types the least popular response from Standard ticket and Older person's bus pass holders was £3.50 whereas the Ten Trip ticket holders were split on their least popular response between £3.50 and £4.00.
<p>Q5b. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey at PEAK TIME (before 9am) if the bus frequency is: 15 mins</p> <p>£2.00: 30.3% £2.50: 30.7% £3.00: 29.7% £3.50: 6.7% £4.00: 2.7%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those aged 65 years and over said the maximum they would pay was £2.00. This aligns with the results for people using an Older person's bus pass. • The most common response from those using a standard ticket was £3.00 and the most common response from those using a Ten Trip ticket was £2.50. • The most common response for the groups using the service 2 days a week or once a week was £2.00. The most common response from those using the service 5 days a week or more was £2.50. • A greater proportion of women were willing to pay more than men if the frequency is less than 20 minutes.
<p>Q5c. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey at PEAK TIME (before 9am) if the bus frequency is: 10 mins</p> <p>£2.00: 22.3% £2.50: 27.7% £3.00: 31.8% £3.50: 9.9% £4.00: 8.4%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common response for those traveling on a standard ticket was £3.00. • The most common response for those travelling using a ten trip pass was £2.50. • The most common response for those using an Older Person's bus pass was £2.00. • The most common response for those in the groups travelling into town once a fortnight or less the most common response was £3.00. • The most common response for those travelling into town five days a week or more was £2.50.
<p>Q6a. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey OFF PEAK (after 9am) if the bus frequency is: 20 mins</p> <p>£1.60: 42.7% £2.00: 37.7% £2.50: 11.6% £3.00: 7.0% £3.50: 0.3% £4.00: 0.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response from Ten trip ticket and Older Person's bus pass travellers was £1.60. • The top response from standard ticket travellers was £2.00. • Just four people responded that the maximum should be £3.50 or more. • There were no significant difference in response levels between those with a disability and those without. • The majority those travelling either 3 to 4 days a week or 5 days a week or more said the maximum charge should be £1.60. • The top response from those travelling once a week or once a month was £2.00.

<p>Q6b. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey OFF PEAK (after 9am) if the bus frequency is: 15 mins</p> <p>£1.60: 27.2% £2.00: 45.0% £2.50: 17.2% £3.00: 8.9% £3.50: 0.7% £4.00: 1.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response from respondent under 65 years was £2.00. • The top response from respondents aged 65 years and over was £1.60. • £2.00 was the top response across all frequencies respondents visit the town centre ranging from 38.3% for those travelling five days a week or more to 51.7% for those travelling once a week. • The majority of those using a standard ticket said the maximum should be £2.00, while the top response from those using an Older Person's bus pass was £1.60.
<p>Q6c. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey OFF PEAK (after 9am) if the bus frequency is: 10 mins</p> <p>£1.60: 18.9% £2.00: 38.2% £2.50: 25.7% £3.00: 14.6% £3.50: 1.1% £4.00: 1.4%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response from those using a standard ticket was £2.00, with 44.5% answering this way. • The top response from those using an older person's bus pass was £2.00 at 29.3%. • The top response from those travelling five days a week or more was £2.50 at 34.8%. • The top response from ten trip ticket holders was also £2.00 with 38.5% of this group answering this way. • Over a quarter (26.3%) of those using an Older Person's bus pass said the maximum should be £1.60, compared to 13.4% of those using a standard ticket.
<p>Q7. The current Park & Ride service BEGINS at 7am on weekdays and 8am on Saturday. Would you use an earlier service if it were available?</p> <p>Yes: 9.1% No: 79.1% Not Sure: 11.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of respondents across all groups said they would not use an earlier service if one was available. • The greatest support for an earlier service was from the 45 to 54 year olds where 25% said they would use an earlier service. • Almost one in five (19.2%) of those travelling five days a week or more said they would use an earlier service. • 18% of ten trip ticket holders said they would use an earlier service – those traveling more than once a week were more in favour of an earlier service than those travelling less often.
<p>Q8. Currently the last Park & Ride bus LEAVES town at 6pm for London Road and 6:10pm for Willington Street, Monday to Saturday. If the service ran later, would you use a later service?</p> <p>Yes: 46.7% No: 36.0% Not Sure: 17.3%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72.5% of respondents travelling out of town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm said they would use a later service if available. • 63.5% of those travelling in before 9am and 67.3% travelling five days a week or more said they would use a later service. • A lower proportion of those using an older person's bus pass said they would use a later service than the overall result at 37.9% compared to 46.7%. • More than half of respondents with a disability said they would use a later service if available.

<p>Q9a. What is the MAXIMUM you would be prepared to pay for a group ticket that includes parking and return travel for up to five people (adults and children) travelling together between the Park & Ride site and Maidstone town centre? Every 20 mins</p> <p>£3.00: 15.5% £3.50: 8.6% £4.00: 12.3% £4.50: 2.7% £5.00: 11.3% £5.50: 1.2% £6.00: 4.4% Wouldn't use: 44.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response across all groups was wouldn't use. Ranging from 31.8% for the 35 to 44 year olds to 55.2% for those travelling into town once a week. • Almost half of those travelling with an older person's bus pass (48.7%) and those traveling with a ten trip ticket (49.2%) said they would use the service described. • Almost one in five (19%) of people with an older persons bus pass said they would pay £3.00 this was the second most popular response from this group. • The second most popular response from those using a standard ticket was £5.00 at 18.4%, and the third most popular answer was £4.00 at 17.6%. • 22% of those traveling five days a week or more and £23.5% of those traveling once a month said the maximum they would pay was £4.00
<p>Q9b. What is the MAXIMUM you would be prepared to pay for a group ticket that includes parking and return travel for up to five people (adults and children) travelling together between the Park & Ride site and Maidstone town centre? Every 15 mins</p> <p>£3.00: 12.7% £3.50: 5.9% £4.00: 11.4% £4.50: 6.5% £5.00: 11.4% £5.50: 3.1% £6.00: 3.7% Wouldn't use: 45.4%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response across all groups was wouldn't use. Ranging from 59.1% for those travelling into town once a week to 31.7% for those traveling into town two days a week. • One in five (20.8%) that use the service three to four days a week said the maximum they would pay was £3.00. • The second most popular response for those travelling either five days a week or more or two days a week was £4.00 at 14.9% and 17.5% respectively. • The second most common answer from standard ticket users was £5.00 at 14.8% and the second most common response from older person bus pass holders was £3.00 at 16.3%. • 31.6% of those traveling into town between 12pm and 2pm said the maximum they would pay was £4.00. • Almost one in five (19.0%) respondents with a disability said the maximum they would pay was £5.00.
<p>Q9c. What is the MAXIMUM you would be prepared to pay for a group ticket that includes parking and return travel for up to five people (adults and children) travelling together between the Park & Ride site and Maidstone town centre? Every 10 mins</p> <p>£3.00: 11.1% £3.50: 4.6% £4.00: 9.5% £4.50: 5.2% £5.00: 14.1% £5.50: 2.0% £6.00: 7.5% Wouldn't use: 46.1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wouldn't use was the top answer across all groups, ranging from 61.9% for those that use the service once a week to 31.6% for those that use the service two days a week. • The 45 to 54 years group had the greatest proportion answering £5.00 at 22.4%. • £5.00 was the second highest response for those using the service five days a week or more at 17.4%. • £4.00 was the second most common response for those using the service 2 days at 19.3%. • Standard ticket users second most common response was £5.00 at 16.8%.

<p>Q10. What time do you generally travel on the Park & Ride service? Into Town</p> <p>Out of Town</p> <p>Before 9am: 21.3%</p> <p>9am to 12pm: 70.7%</p> <p>12pm to 2pm: 6.2%</p> <p>2pm to 4.30pm: 1.3%</p> <p>4.30pm to 6.30pm: 0.4%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96.8% of ten trip ticket holders travel before 9am. • 90.9% of older person's pass holders travel between 9am and 12pm. • 72.5% of standard ticket holders travel between 9am and 12pm and 16.2% of this group travel before 9am. • The majority (84.6%) of those using the service five days or more a week travel before 9am. • More than one in five using the service two days a week or once a week travel between 9am and 12pm at 86.0% and 81.6% respectively.
<p>Q10. What time do you generally travel on the Park & Ride service?</p> <p>Before 9am: 0.2%</p> <p>9am to 12pm: 6.9%</p> <p>12pm to 2pm: 24.2%</p> <p>2pm to 4.30pm: 39.1%</p> <p>4.30pm to 6.30pm: 29.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of responders in the 16 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years and the 45 to 54 years groups travel out of town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm. • 70.5% of ten trip ticket users travel out of town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm. • 45.0% of older person's bus pass users travel out of town between 2pm and 4.30pm and 35.6% of this group travel out between 12pm and 2pm. • 38.8% of standard ticket users travel out of town between 2pm and 4pm and 37.3% travel out between 4.30pm and 6.30pm.
<p>Q11. Do you currently make use of the following? On bus Wi-Fi</p> <p>Yes: 25.5%</p> <p>No: 69.0%</p> <p>Unaware of this: 5.5%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the different ticket type the ten trip ticket users make use of the on board wi-fi the most with 38.7% responding yes. • 79.4% of older person's bus pass users and 58.9% of standard ticket users said they did not use the bus wi-fi. • 51.9% of those using the service five days week or more said they did not use the bus wi-fi.
<p>Q11. Do you currently make use of the following? P&R Mobile App</p> <p>Yes: 7.8%</p> <p>No: 72.2%</p> <p>Unaware of this: 20.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the different ticket types standard ticket users had the greatest proportion saying they use the mobile app at 11.4%. • 72.1% of ten trip ticket users and 78.6% older person's bus pass users said they do not make use of the P&R mobile app. • 24.3% of standard ticket users and 23.0% of ten trip ticket users said they were unaware of the mobile app.
<p>Q12. Which of the following things do you think is MOST IMPORTANT for a good Park & Ride Service? Please select up to two answers</p> <p>Short journey times: 21.6%</p> <p>Frequent buses: 65.6%</p> <p>Good security at car parks: 40.1%</p> <p>Clean, modern buses: 18.9%</p> <p>Should be cheaper than parking in town Centre: 75.6%</p> <p>Other: 4.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent buses and should be cheaper than parking in the town were the top two responses across all groups. • Good security at car parks was third most common response across all groups. • A greater proportion of women compared to men said frequent buses, and a greater proportion of men than women said short journey times.

<p>Q14. If payment for Park & Ride was per car rather than per person on the bus would you use the service more frequently?</p> <p>Yes - would use service more frequently: 12.9%</p> <p>No - would use service same amount: 47.2%</p> <p>No - would use service less frequently: 13.3%</p> <p>Unsure: 7.9%</p> <p>I would stop using the service: 18.7%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those using the service once a month or less often had the greatest proportion across all groups that said they would use the service more frequently at 36.8%. • Across the different ticket types those using an older person's bus pass had the greatest proportion saying they would stop using the service if payment was per car at 25.1%. • Out of the ticket types, standard ticket holder had the greatest proportion say they would use the service more frequently at 29.5%. • 18.0% of those using the service five or more times week and 26.5% of those using the service three to four times a week said they would stop using the service.
<p>Q15. If payment for park and Ride was taken at the car park and was per car, would this make you more likely to car share to the Park and Ride site?</p> <p>Yes: 14.8%</p> <p>No: 67.1%</p> <p>Not Sure: 13.6%</p> <p>I already car share when using the Park & Ride service: 4.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the ticket type the standard ticket holder had the greatest proportion responding yes at 28.1%. The older person bus pass users had the lowest proportion responding this way at 7.6% but the greatest responding that they already car share when using the service at 6.3%. • Across the usage frequencies, those using the service once a month had the greatest proportion responding yes at 27.8%. • 72% of those travelling before 9am responded no, as did 77% of ten trip ticket users.
<p>Q16a. What is the MAXIMUM charge you would be prepared to pay for parking at the Park & Ride site and a return journey (for up to 5 people travelling together) to Maidstone town centre? Peak Time</p> <p>£2.50: 16.1%</p> <p>£3.00: 13.8%</p> <p>£3.50: 7.7%</p> <p>£4.00: 10.0%</p> <p>£4.50: 1.8%</p> <p>£5.00: 13.3%</p> <p>Would not use: 37.5%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not use was the top response across all ticket types, with the older person's bus pass users having the greatest proportion responding this way at 48.9%. • The top response from the 45 to 54 years group was split between the lowest charges (£2.50) and the highest charge (£5.00) both at 24.6%. Across the age groups the 45 to 54 years olds were the least likely to say they would not use the service at 15.8%. • One in five traveling into town between 12pm and 2pm and those using the service less than once a month said £5.00 was the maximum they were prepared to pay.
<p>Q16b. What is the MAXIMUM charge you would be prepared to pay for parking at the Park & Ride site and a return journey (for up to 5 people travelling together) to Maidstone town centre? Off peak</p> <p>£2.50: 34.8%</p> <p>£3.00: 14.1%</p> <p>£3.50: 7.2%</p> <p>£4.00: 6.9%</p> <p>£4.50: 1.5%</p> <p>£5.00: 6.9%</p> <p>Would not use: 28.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those using the service three to four days a week had the greatest proportion that said they would the service at 38.4% across all groups. • The 45 to 54 years group had the greatest proportion across all groups responded £5.00 at 13.2%. • 40.8% of older person's bus pass users responded £2.00 while 33.3% said they wouldn't use.

<p>Q17. Do you think people who are currently able to use Park & Ride for free should pay less than the full fare under a pay to park scheme?</p> <p>Yes: 60.5% No: 34.6% Not sure: 15.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 45 to 54 years group has the greatest proportion, across all groups, responding no at 45.6%. The ten trip ticket holder had the second greatest proportion responding no at 45.2%. • Across the different ticket types those using a standard ticket had the greatest proportion that were unsure at 24.5%. • Across the different usage frequencies those using the service five days or more a week had the lowest proportion that responded yes. • 75.8% of those using an older person's bus pass responded yes.
<p>Q18. How much do you think concessionary pass holders should pay to use the Park & Ride service?</p> <p>Less than £1: 22.5% £1.00: 36.7% £1.50: 10.1% £2.00: 9.6% £2.50: 1.6% £3.00: 1.2% Everyone should pay the same: 18.4%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 35 to 44 years group had the greatest proportion saying that everyone should pay the same at 42.2%. The ten trip ticket user had the second greatest proportion responding this way at 38.7%. • 41.9% of users with an older person's bus pass answered £1: this was the top answer from this group. • The top response from the 75 years and over group was split between less than £1 and £1 with 33.8% each. • Responders using the service five days or more were split between everyone should pay the same and £1 at 33.3% each.

Non User Questions	
<p>Q13. How do you generally travel into Maidstone town centre?</p> <p>Walk: 22.8% Cycle: 2.9% Car, Van or Motorcycle: 61.7% Bus: 9.4% Train: 0.7% I don't visit Maidstone Town Centre: 2.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car, van or motorcycle was the top responses across all groups. • The 64 to 74 years group had the greatest proportion responding bus at 31.9%. • Those aged 75 years and over had the greatest proportion saying they do not visit Maidstone town centre at 16.7%. • Those aged 25 to 34 years had the greatest proportion that responded walking at 36.4%: this group are most likely to live in or close to the town centre.
<p>Q20. How often do you travel into Maidstone town centre? (car, van and motorcycle responders)</p> <p>5 or more days a week: 14.3% 3 to 4 days a week: 8.7% 2 days a week: 13.6% Once a week: 23.7% Once a fortnight: 17.1% Once a month: 12.2% Less often than once a month: 10.5%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half (55.9%) of those traveling before 9am do so five or more times a week. • 22.4% of those that said they would use the Willington Street site and 23.3% of those that said they would use the London Road site travel into town once a week. • 33% of those age 64 to 74 years travel into town once a week and 24.1% said they visit once a fortnight. • 28.6% of those aged 18 to 34 years and 25% of those aged 34 to 44 years travel into town five days or more a week.
<p>Q21a. What time do you generally travel into Maidstone town centre? Into town</p> <p>Before 9am: 21.2% 9am to 12pm: 58.0% 12pm to 2pm: 8.8% 2pm to 4.30pm: 7.1% 4.30pm to 6.30pm: 3.5% After 6.30pm: 1.4%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of people traveling into town before 9am declines as age increases. • 78.8% of those aged 65 to 74 years said they travel into town between 9am and 12pm. • 52.0% of those that said they would use the Willington Street site and 72.4% of those that said they would use London Road site travel in between 9am and 12pm.

<p>Q21b. What time do you generally travel into Maidstone town centre? Out of town</p> <p>Before 9am: 3.1% 9am to 12pm: 18.4% 12pm to 2pm: 28.4% 2pm to 4.30pm: 24.1% 4.30pm to 6.30pm: 22.2% After 6.30pm: 3.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42.9% of the 18 to 34 year old travel out of town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm. • 42.6% of those aged 64 to 74 years said they travel out of town between 12pm and 2pm. • 10.5% of those traveling into town five days or more a week do so after 6.30pm. • 34.6% of those that said they would use the London Road site said they travel out of town between 12pm and 2pm and 30.4% of those that said they would use the London Road site said they travel out of town at this time too.
<p>Q22a. Does your route take you near either of the Park & Ride sites? Willington Street</p> <p>Yes: 22.0% No: 75.8% Not sure: 2.2%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% of people who said they would use the Willington Street site said their route took them near Willington Street. • 28.1% of those traveling before 9am said their route took them near the Willington Street site. • 31.3% of those travelling into town once a fortnight said their route took them near the Willington Street site.
<p>Q22b. Does your route take you near either of the Park & Ride sites? London Road</p> <p>Yes: 13.7% No: 84.7% Not sure: 1.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43.3% of those that said they would use the London Road site said that their route take them near the site. • 10.3% of those traveling into town five days or more a week, 29.0% of those travelling into town two days a week and 13.8% of those traveling into town once a week said their route takes them past the London Road site.
<p>Q23. If you work in Maidstone town centre, does your employer provide any parking for staff?</p> <p>Yes - Paid for: 2.4% Yes – Free: 7.7% No: 7.0% I don't work in Maidstone town centre: 82.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34.1% of those traveling in five days or more a week said their employer provides free parking. • There were no respondents that said they would use either site that have parking provided by their employer which they have to pay for. • 8.3% of those traveling before 9am said their employer provides parking that they are charged to use.
<p>Q24. If you've answered YES to the previous question, do you use the parking provided by your employer?</p> <p>Yes: 55.1% No: 44.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85.7% of those traveling into town five days or more a week use the parking provided by their employer. • Women are slightly more likely to use the parking provided by their employer than men. • There were no enough responses across the different groupings to make any further comments.
<p>Q25. Based on the information above to what extent do you agree or disagree that the Park & Ride service provides good value for money?</p> <p>Strongly agree: 24.2% Tend to agree: 29.6% No strong opinion either way: 22.0% Tend to disagree: 14.4% Strongly disagree: 9.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion agreeing across all groups at 71.4% • Those traveling out of town after 6.30pm had the greatest proportion that disagreed across all groups at 50%. • A greater proportion of women than men agreed (Strongly & Tend to) that the service provides good value for money at 62.9% compared to 47.6%. • 68.0% of those that would use the Willington Street site and 43.3% of those that said they would use the London Road site said they agreed. • Those visiting the town centre less than once a month had the greatest proportion across all groups that had no strong opinion either way at 32.1%.

<p>Q26a. Would you ever consider using one of the Park & Ride Services? Willington Street</p> <p>Yes: 18.7% Not sure: 13.8% No: 67.5%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents traveling into town five times or more a week had the greatest proportion across all groups that said they would not consider using Willington Street. • Respondents in the 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding yes, across all groups at 38.1%. • Across the different visit frequencies those who visit the town centre less often than once a month were most likely to say yes at 37.0%.
<p>Q26b. Would you ever consider using one of the Park & Ride Services? London Road</p> <p>Yes: 12.0% Not sure: 13.2% No: 74.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those visiting the town centre less often than once a month had the greatest proportion responding yes across all groups at 24.0%, followed by the 25 to 34 years group where 23.5% responded yes. • Those that said no they wouldn't consider using the Willington Street site, also had the greatest proportion saying no, they wouldn't use the London Road site at 87.1%. Followed by those which visit the town centre once a fortnight at 86.4%. • 51.4% of those who were not sure about using the Willington Street site were also not sure about using the London Road site.
<p>Q27. How often do you think you would use the Park & Ride service?</p> <p>5 times a week or more: 2.7% 3 to 4 times a week: 3.6% 1 to 2 times a week: 13.3% Once a fortnight: 4.4% Once a month: 10.7% Less than once a month: 30.7% Don't know: 34.7%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that travel into the town centre five days or more a week had the greatest proportion across all groups responding that they would use the service five times or more a week at 11.4%. In addition 10.6% of those travelling out of town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm said they would use the service 5 times a week or more. • Those that travel into town between 2pm and 4.30pm had the greatest proportion responding don't know at 55.6%. • Over a third of respondents in the 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years and 55 to 64 years groups said they would use the service less than once a month.
<p>Q28. Which of the following things do you think is MOST IMPORTANT for a good Park & Ride service?</p> <p>Short journey times: 31.2% Frequent buses: 71.5% Good security at car parks: 28.9% Clean, modern buses: 13.9% Should be cheaper than parking in town Centre: 70.4% Other: 12.3%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent buses and should be cheaper than the town centre were the top two responses across all groups. • Frequent buses had a greater proportion saying this aspect was most important than should be cheaper than parking in the town centre for the 45 to 54 years and 55 to 64 years groups. The other age groups had greater proportions saying P&R should be cheaper than parking in the town centre, than there was for frequent buses. • Those that travel to the town centre five days or more a week had the greatest proportion saying that short journey times are important at 41.5%. • Those that said they would use the London Road site had the greatest proportion saying that good security at car parks was important at 36.7%. The data also suggests that those with a disability and men are more likely to say security is important than their grouped counterparts.

<p>Q29. How frequently would a bus need to depart in each direction, morning and evening, to meet your needs?</p> <p>Every 10 minutes: 40.1% Every 15 minutes: 31.0% Every 20 minutes: 18.7% Other: 10.3%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that visit the town centre five days a week or more had the greatest proportion, across all groups, said they would need buses to depart every ten minutes to meet their needs at 58.3%. Those that travel into town less often than once a month had the lowest proportion for ten minute bus frequencies at 28.0% • Across all groups the 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding 15 minutes at 47.6%. Those respondents which travel between 4.30pm and 6.30pm favoured a frequency of every 10 minutes, no one in the group said 15 minutes. Those travelling in between 2pm and 4.30pm had the second lowest proportion responding this way at 21.1%. • Those that said they would use the London Road site had the greatest proportion responding that they need a bus to depart every 20 minutes across all groups at 36.7% (respondents in this group were split with a further 36.7% of this group responding 10 minutes. Those that travel to the town centre five days a week or more had the lowest proportion responding 15 minutes at 2.8%.
<p>Q30a. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey at PEAK TIME (before 9am) if the bus frequency is: 20 mins</p> <p>£2.00: 24.9% £2.50: 16.6% £3.00: 8.3% £3.50: 1.7% £4.00: 1.7% Would not use: 46.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not use was the top response across all groups, ranging from 66.7% for those traveling into town before 9am to 26.1% for those that said they would use the Willington Street site. • The 55 to 64 years group had the greatest proportion that responded £2.00 at 39.2%. • Those who said they would use the Willington Street site had the greatest proportion responding £2.50 at 34.8%. • The 25 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion that responded £3.00 at 22.2%. • Those that said they would not use either site had the greatest proportion responding £3.50. • Those that said they would use the London Road site had the greatest proportion responding £4.00 at 11.8%.
<p>Q30b. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey at PEAK TIME (before 9am) if the bus frequency is: 15 mins</p> <p>£2.00: 19.7% £2.50: 17.2% £3.00: 15.0% £3.50: 1.7% £4.00: 2.2% Would not use: 44.2%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response for the majority of groups was would not use (the exceptions are would use Willington Street site and not sure if would use the Willington Street site). Those that travel to the town centre five or more days a week had the greatest proportion responding would not use at 58.3%. • Those that said they would use the Willington Street site had the greatest proportion responding £2.00 at 33.3%. • Those who travel out of town between 2pm and 4.30pm had the greatest proportion that responded £3.00 at 25.0%. • Those travelling into town between 12pm and 2pm had the greatest proportion responding £3.50 at 8.3%. • Those that said they would use London Road had the greatest proportion responded £4.00 at 10.3%.

<p>Q30c. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey at PEAK TIME (before 9am) if the bus frequency is: 10 mins</p> <p>£2.00: 18.9% £2.50: 16.2% £3.00: 15.4% £3.50: 7.9% £4.00: 4.0% Would not use: 37.7%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response for the majority of groups was would not use (the exceptions came from the groups that said they would use Willington Street site and those who said they were not sure if would use the London Road site). • Those that travel to the town centre between 12pm and 2pm had the greatest proportion responding would not use at 50.0%. • Those that travel out of town between 9am and 12pm had the greatest proportion responding £2.00 at 31.4%. • Those traveling to the town centre 3 to 4 days a week had the greatest proportion responding £2.50 at 40.0%. • Those who said they would not use either the Willington Road site or the London Road site had the greatest proportion responding £3.00 at 26.7%. • Those leaving town between 2pm and 4.30pm had the greatest proportion responding £3.50 at 17.3%. • Those that said they were not sure about using the London Road site had the greatest proportion of responses for £4.00 at 11.5%.
<p>Q31a. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey OFF PEAK (after 9am) if the bus frequency is: Every 20 mins</p> <p>£1.60: 29.3% £2.00: 17.8% £2.50: 10.3% £3.00: 3.3% £3.50: 0.8% £4.00: 0.4% Would not use: 38.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top responses were £1.60 and wouldn't use across all groups. For some groups £1.60 was top and other wouldn't use was top. • Respondents with a disability had the greatest proportion responding that they would not use the service at 53.3%. • The top answer for the age groups under 45 years was £1.60 and the top answer for groups 65 years and over was would not use. • Across the different visiting frequencies the top answer was would not use for all frequencies expect those visiting the town centre once a fortnight where the top answer was £1.60. • More than half of male respondents (52.1%) said they would not use the service compared to 29.6% of women.
<p>Q31b. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey OFF PEAK (after 9am) if the bus frequency is: Every 15 mins</p> <p>£1.60: 24.6% £2.00: 21.6% £2.50: 10.3% £3.00: 5.2% £3.50: 0.9% £4.00: 0.9% Would not use: 36.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding £1.60 at 28.6% across the different age groups: this was the top response for this group. For the other age group the top answer was would not use with the exception of the 55 to 64 years group who were split between £1.60 and would not use. • There was some variation across the different visiting frequencies with the top response from those traveling five days a week or more, 2days week, once a week,, once a month and less often than once a month being they would not use the service. The top response from those traveling three to four days a week was £1.60 at 35.0% and the top response for those traveling once a fortnight was £2.00 at 29.3%. • The top response for those that said they would use either Willington Street or London Road was split between £1.60 and £2.00 both at 34.4% each.

<p>Q31c. What is the MAXIMUM daily charge you would pay for a return Park & Ride journey OFF PEAK (after 9am) if the bus frequency is: Every 10 mins</p> <p>£1.60: 26.0% £2.00: 19.9% £2.50: 14.7% £3.00: 7.8% £3.50: 2.2% £4.00: 0.4% Would not use: 29.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top response from those who said they would use either of the P&R sites was £1.60 with 37.1% followed by £2.00 with 30.6%. • Across the different visiting frequencies those visiting the town centre 5 days or more had the greatest proportion responding would not use at 43.2%. Would not use was also the top response for those visiting the town centre once a month or less than once a month. Those visiting 3 to 4 days a week were split across three responses: £1.60, £2.00 and would not use all at 30.0%. The top response for those visiting 2 days a week and once a fortnight was £2.00 with more than a quarter of these groups responding this way.
<p>Q32a. What is the MAXIMUM you would be prepared to pay for a group ticket that includes parking and return travel for up to five people (adults and children) travelling together between the Park & Ride site and Maidstone town centre? Every 20 mins</p> <p>£3.00: 19.2% £3.50: 6.6% £4.00: 9.9% £4.50: 0.8% £5.00: 9.9% £5.50: 0.4% £6.00: 3.7% Wouldn't use: 49.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all groups, except those that said they would use the Willington Street site, the top response was would not use. • The top response for those that would use the Willington Street site was £3.00 with 32.6%. This was the greatest proportion responding £3.00. • Those traveling into town 3 to 4 days a week had the greatest proportion responding £3.50 at 15.0%. • Respondents that said they would not use either of the P&R sites had the greatest proportion responding £4.00 at 23.5%. • Those that travel into town between 2pm and 4pm had the greatest proportion responding £4.50 at 5.3%. • The 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding £5.00 at 19.0%. This group also had the greatest proportion responding £5.50 at 4.8%. • Those visiting less often than once a month had the greatest proportion responding £6.00 at 11.5%.
<p>Q32b. What is the MAXIMUM you would be prepared to pay for a group ticket that includes parking and return travel for up to five people (adults and children) travelling together between the Park & Ride site and Maidstone town centre? Every 15 mins</p> <p>£3.00: 15.7% £3.50: 9.6% £4.00: 10.0% £4.50: 3.5% £5.00: 9.1% £5.50: 1.7% £6.00: 2.6% Wouldn't use: 47.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all groups, except those that said they would use the Willington Street site, the top response was would not use. Those in the 65 to 74 years group had the greatest proportion responding this way at 68.3%. • The top response for those that would use the Willington Street site was £3.00 with 26.8%. • Those that travel out of town between 9am and 12pm had the greatest proportion responding £3.00 at 27.8%. • Those that visit 3 to 4 days a week had the greatest proportion responding £3.50 at 20.0%. • Those who responded not sure to using the London Road site had the greatest proportion responding £4.00 at 19.2%. • Those who said they would not use either site had the greatest proportion responding £4.50 at 12.5%. • The 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding £5.00 at 19.0%. • Those that responded not sure to using the Willington Street site had the greatest proportion responding £5.50 at 6.5%. • Those that visit the town centre less often than once a month had the greatest proportion responding £6.00 at 8.0%.

<p>Q32c. What is the MAXIMUM you would be prepared to pay for a group ticket that includes parking and return travel for up to five people (adults and children) travelling together between the Park & Ride site and Maidstone town centre? Every 10 mins</p> <p>£3.00: 15.1% £3.50: 9.6% £4.00: 10.0% £4.50: 3.5% £5.00: 9.1% £5.50: 1.7% £6.00: 2.6% Wouldn't use: 47.8%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not use was the top response for the majority of groups. The exceptions are those that travel into town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm where £6.00 was the top response at 30.0% and those that said they would use the London Road site where £3.00 was the top response with 25.0%. • Those traveling out of town between 9am and 12pm had the greatest proportion responding £3.00 at 29.4%. • Those traveling into town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm had the greatest proportion responding £3.50 at 20.0%. • Those that would use the London Road site had the greatest proportion responding £4.00 at 27.6%. • Those traveling into town between 12pm and 2pm had the greatest proportion responding £4.50 at 12.5%. • Those visiting the town centre one a fortnight had the greatest proportion responding £5.00 at 23.7%.
<p>Q33. The current service BEGINS at 7am on weekdays and 8am on weekends. If the service began earlier would you use an earlier service?</p> <p>Yes: 8.2% No: 73.7% Not Sure: 18.0%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those traveling in between 4.30pm and 6.30pm had the greatest proportion responding yes at 30.0% followed by those that visit 3 to 4 days a week at 26.1%. • No-one in the groups that visit the town centre 2 days a week or once a month said they would use an earlier service. • Those that visit the town 2 days a week had the greatest proportion responding no at 85.3% followed by the 65 to 74 years group with 84.6%. • Those that visit less than once a month had the greatest proportion responding not sure at 36.0%.
<p>Q34. Currently the last bus LEAVES town at 6pm for London Road and 6:10pm for Willington Street, Monday to Saturday. If the service ran later, would you use a later service?</p> <p>Yes: 25.9% No: 50.2% Not Sure: 23.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that travel into town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm had the greatest proportion responding yes at 50.0%, followed by the 18 to 34 years group at 47.6%. • Those traveling into town between 12pm and 2pm had the greatest proportion responding no at 66.7%. • Those that visit 3 to 4 days a week had the greatest proportion responding not sure at 47.8%.
<p>Q35. If payment for Park & Ride was per vehicle rather than per person on the bus would you consider using the service?</p> <p>Yes: 41.2% No: 33.9% Unsure: 24.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those traveling into town between 4.30pm and 6.30pm had the greatest proportion responding yes at 70.0% followed by those that said they would use Willington Street at 67.4%. • The 65 to 74 years group had the greatest proportion responding no at 53.8% (and the lowest proportion responding yes at 21.2%). Those that said they were not sure about using the London Road site had the lowest proportion responding no at 14.8%. • No-one in that travels into town between 4.30pm and 6.30 responded unsure. Those that said they were not sure about using the Willington Street site had the greatest proportion responding unsure to this question at 41.9%.

<p>Q36. If payment for Park & Ride was taken at the car park and was per vehicle would this make you more likely to car share?</p> <p>Yes: 27.2% No: 37.8% Not Sure: 17.1% N/A: 17.9%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that travel into Maidstone town centre 3 to 4 days a week had the greatest proportion responding yes at 43.5%. Those that had travel in between 2pm and 4.30pm had the lowest proportion responding this way at 5.9%. • Those that travel into town between 2pm and 4.30 have the greatest proportion responding no at 58.8%. Those that were not sure about using the Willington Street site had lowest proportion responding this way at 12.9%. • Those that said they were not sure about using the Willington Street site and those that were not sure about using the London Road site had the greatest proportions responding not sure at 32.3% and 33.3% respectively. Those traveling into town five days or more a week had the lowest proportion responding not sure at 5.4%.
<p>Q37a. What is the MAXIMUM charge you would be prepared to pay for parking at the Park & Ride site and a return journey (for up to 5 people travelling together, adults and children) to Maidstone town centre? Peak Time</p> <p>£2.50: 14.1% £3.00: 12.0% £3.50: 9.9% £4.00: 10.3% £4.50: 2.9% £5.00: 17.4% N/A: 33.5%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common response for those in age groups 45 years and over was N/A. The top answer from the 35 to 44 years group was £2.50 at 25%, this was the greatest proportion across all groups responding £2.50. The top answer from the 18 to 35 years group was split between £3.50 and £4.00 both at 19.0%. • The 65 to 74 years group had the greatest proportion responding N/A at 52.0% • Across the different visiting frequencies the top answer from all groups except those traveling in 3 to 4 days a week and 2 days a week was N/A. Those traveling 3 to 4 days a week a week top answer was £3.00 at 28.6% and the top answer from those traveling 2 days a week was £5.00 at 25.0%.
<p>Q37b. What is the MAXIMUM charge you would be prepared to pay for parking at the Park & Ride site and a return journey (for up to 5 people travelling together, adults and children) to Maidstone town centre? Off Peak</p> <p>£2.50: 24.2% £3.00: 12.7% £3.50: 9.8% £4.00: 14.4% £4.50: 1.7% £5.00: 7.2% N/A: 30.1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common response for those in age groups 45 years and over was N/A. The top answer from the 35 to 44 years group was £2.50 at 33.3%. The top answer from the 18 to 35 years group was split between £2.50 and £4.00 both at 23.8%. • Of those that travel into town before 9am 35.8% responded £2.50 and 28.3% responded N/A. • Of those that travel 5 or more days a week the top response was N/A with 40.5% followed by £2.50 at 24.3%. • £2.50 was the top response from those that travel 3 to 4 days a week and those who travel 2 days a week at 26.3% and 34.4% respectively. It was also the top answer for those traveling in before 9am. • Those that travel less often than once a month were split between £2.50 and N/A with both at 28.0%.

<p>Q38. Do you think people who are currently able to use Park & Ride for free should pay less than the full fare under a pay to park scheme?</p> <p>Yes: 44.5% No: 33.9% Not sure: 21.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that travel into town once a month had the greatest proportion responding yes at 61.3%. Those that travel into town five days a week or more had the lowest proportion responding yes at 29.7%. • Respondents with a disability had the greatest proportion responding no at 53.3% and those who travel in 3 to 4 days had the lowest proportion responding no at 18.2%. • Those that visit the town centre less often than once a month have the greatest proportion responding not sure at 42.3% and those visiting once a week had the lowest proportion responding this way at 12.7%.
<p>Q39. How much do you think concessionary pass holders should pay to use the Park & Ride service?</p> <p>Less than £1: 21.8% £1.00: 32.5% £1.50: 6.6% £2.00: 9.1% £2.50: 2.1% £3.00: 0.4% Everyone should pay the same: 27.6%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those traveling five days a week or more had the greatest proportion responding everyone should pay the same at 43.2% (this group also had the greatest proportion responding £3.00 at 2.7%). Those traveling out of town between 9am and 12pm had the lowest proportion responding this way at 12.8%. • The 25 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion responding less than £1 at 33.3% and those that were not sure about using the Willington Street site had the lowest proportion responding this way at 9.7%. • Those that said they were not sure about using the Willington Street site had the greatest proportion responding £1 at 48.4% while those that travel in between 2pm and 4.30pm had the lowest proportion responding this way at 18.8%.
<p>Q40. Would any of the following attract you to use the service?</p> <p>Pay by card: 52.4% Pay by mobile App: 31.0% Comfortable leather seating: 6.4% Secure bicycle storage: 4.3% Electronic Car Charging: 8.0% Car Sharing Mobile App: 3.7% On board USB Charging: 7.0% On board Wi-Fi: 21.4% Real time travel information: 41.7% Other: 32.1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those that said they would use the Willington street site had the greatest proportion across all groups selecting pay by card as one of their responses at 54.0%. The 65 to 74 group had the lowest proportion answering pay by card, across the different groups at 4.9%. • Pay by card was the top response for those traveling in before 9am at 40.0%. • The top response for those visiting the town centre five days or more a week was live travel information at 34.1% followed by pay by mobile app with pay by card. • Those that said they would use the Willington Street site had the greatest proportion responding live travel information across all groups at 46.0% and those in the group 65 to 74 years had the lowest proportion responding this way at 5.4%.

Demographics

Q45. Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	40.4%	315
Female	59.0%	460
In another way	0.6%	5
	Answered	780
	Skipped	124

Q48. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	12.22%	94
No	87.78%	675
	Answered	769
	Skipped	135

Q46. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
16 to 17 years	0.1%	1
18 to 24 years	1.8%	14
25 to 34 years	7.1%	55
35 to 44 years	13.9%	108
45 to 54 years	17.3%	135
55 to 64 years	20.3%	158
65 to 74 years	28.8%	224
75 years and over	10.8%	84
	Answered	779
	Skipped	125

Q47. Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	94.0%	704
White: Irish	1.5%	11
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1%	1
White: Other (please specify)	1.5%	11
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Black Caribbean	0.1%	1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Black African	0.0%	0
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Asian	0.1%	1
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: Other Mixed (please specify)	0.1%	1
Asian/Asian British: Indian	0.5%	4
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0.4%	3
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.1%	1
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.0%	0
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian (please specify)	0.3%	2
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	0.3%	2
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	0.1%	1
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black (please specify)	0.0%	0
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	0.1%	1
Any other ethnic group (please specify)	0.7%	5
	Answered	749
	Skipped	155

For more information about the consultation process please contact the Policy & Information Team by emailing consultation@maids.tone.gov.uk

APPENDIX 3

Business Survey highlights

Current situation

Number of spaces available	Response
Under 10	9%
Over 10	18%
None available	73%
Associated cost to business	
Included within lease/rent	16%
Pay additional costs	12%
Owned	5%
Costs to staff	
Free parking	24%
Discounted parking	7%
Current incentives	
Discounted Town Centre parking	10%
No travel currently concessions offered	85%

Summary: *There is potential to market the P&R service to 73% of those that responded if we offer something different as they do not have suitable alternatives. More detailed understanding is needed of the type and size of businesses that responded to establish how useful this information is. 58 responses in total with some businesses providing more than 1 response, 34% were office based and 17% were in the retail sector.*

49% employ up to 25 employees with 41% employing between 25-100 employees and 10% employing over 100 employees.

12% of businesses pay additional costs for their parking and they may be interested in viewing a comparison in their current costs and the costs of P&R.

Park & Ride Service

General Information/service issues	
Awareness of P&R service	98% are aware
Whether the service on Saturday is suitable	25% do not agree
Whether the service on a Weekday is suitable	76% do not agree
Optimum operating frequency	48% said every 10 minutes
	30% said every 15 minutes

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Summary Good awareness of the service but 76% said that the service does not suit their business need on a weekday, predominately this was due to location (39%) frequency (33%) and operating hours (47%).

1 said the bus needed to run on Sunday's and 1 said we should offer a peak service which runs more frequently and an off peak service that runs less frequently.

Future delivery

Interested in offering P&R to staff as an incentive	25% were interested
	40% were not sure
Interested in being contacted regarding discounts and offers	88% were interested
Events that provide opportunity to develop the service through commercial activity	37% hold events either regularly or occasionally

Summary

There is potential to generate interest in a staff incentive for the future with a small amount of businesses who responded. This may grow once we agree the terms especially as the survey has been carried out over a busy, short period.

There are a number of businesses who would be willing to collaborate and provide promotion of P&R to staff and visitors = 1.6 (Weighted Av)

Comments:	Volume:
Frequency	X 6
Operational hours	X 9
Location	X 3
More promotion	X 1
Service comments	X 3

APPENDIX 5

Equality Impact Assessment Park and Ride Scheme

Authority:	Maidstone Borough Council
Date EqIA commenced:	February 2017
Date first stage EqIA finalised for pre-consultation decision:	May 2017
Date second stage EqIA finalised after consultation closed, prior to final decision being taken:	January 2018
Job titles of officers involved in completing the EqIA:	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer

Summary of decision to be made

The Park and Ride was introduced in the 1980s to Maidstone. The purpose a Park and Ride Service is to reduce congestion and improve air quality. Its future in assisting deliver this for Maidstone forms part of a complimentary body of work been undertaken as part of the Integrated Transport Strategy.

The Park and Ride originally ran from four sites until 2007/8 when the Coombe Quarry Site was closed. This was followed by the Sittingbourne road site in 2016 as the cost of leasing the sites became financially unviable. The council has maintained a Park and Ride scheme to date, operating from the remaining two sites; Willington Street and London Road.

Maidstone is unusual, when compared to its nearest neighbours in Kent and Essex, in providing a Park and Ride Scheme. It is more commonly the jurisdiction of the County Council in a two tier system of local government.

The Council faces increased savings pressures. It is required to make savings of approximately £4.2m over the next years. There is a working assumption in the Efficiency Plan that £75,000 will be saved from the Park and Ride Service.

A full review of the scheme was commissioned in 2016. The objectives of the review were to:

- Review and assess whether the current Park and Ride service offers value for money;
- Review and assess the impact the service has in supporting the ITS, specifically in terms of reducing peak time traffic congestion and improving air quality;
- Identify any other benefits Park and Ride delivers;

- Ensure the review is complementary to the strategic study looking at Park and Ride provision in the long term; and
- Explore different uses for the funding and assets that are currently used for Park and Ride.

Scope of this equality impact assessment

- Review of the current scheme and users pre consultation
- Review the options for decision utilising user data and consultation results as an evidence base.

How is the decision relevant to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The need to ensure that the scheme is not unlawfully discriminatory is relevant to the first aim of the duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The need to consider how we can take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and whether people with disabilities may need to be treated more favourably, in how the scheme is designed, is relevant to the second aim of the duty to advance equality of opportunity.

The proposed service changes could also be relevant to fostering good relations with regard to maintaining the confidence and trust in the local authority by people with protected characteristics who may use our services.

Review of the current scheme

The Park and Ride service operates from two sites: Willington Street and London Road.

The London Road site has 518 spaces and 17 disabled bays. Willington Street has 352 space and 16 disabled bays. Buses run to and from the town centre every 20 minutes between 7.00 and 18.30 Monday to Friday and 8.00 to 18.30 on Saturday. It costs £2.60 for a peak time return before 9.00am Monday to Friday and £1.60 for a non-peak return any time after this and all day Saturday. Discounts are available for those making 10 single trips or who purchase a 12 weekly or annual season ticket.

The review examined the short to medium term operational future of Park and Ride only; making the best use of the current assets used for Park and Ride within financial plans. It did not consider options like changing the location of the Park and Ride sites. The review was carried out to be complementary to the separate tri-study commissioned by the Spatial Policy team, which covers Maidstone bus interchange, Park and Ride and Parking at a more strategic level and over a longer term.

Park and Ride users can be identified from the income details provided below for the most recent financial period, 2016/17:

Ticket Type	Fares (£)	Passengers	Total Annual Income
Peak Fares	2.60	9,734	25,308.40
Off Peak	1.60	63,849	102,158.40
Single	2.60	885	2,301.00
10 Trip ticket	10.30	8,044	82,853.20
Concessions	0.82	132,677	108,808.41
Season tickets	206.00	97	19,982.00
Total		215,286	£341,411.41

(Table 1)

Age

We do not collect this data on Park and Ride users; However it seems Park and Ride service users are more likely to be of a pensionable age based on the income data available (above). Older Person's Bus Pass holders account for 61.6% of users which is considerably higher than the population average for Maidstone. This data will be requested during consultation with users and non-users of the service and will be considered as part of the consultation evaluation.

Sex

We do not collect this data on Park and Ride users; however this data will be requested during consultation with users and non-users of the service and will be considered as part of the consultation evaluation.

Disability

We do not hold data on users with a disability; however this data will be requested during consultation with users and non-users of the service and will be considered as part of the consultation evaluation.

Race

We do not collect this data on Park and Ride users; however this data will be requested during consultation with users and non-users of the service and will be considered as part of the consultation evaluation.

Other protected characteristics

We do not collect information about the following characteristics from service users as it is not relevant to the service being offered, and this will not be collected or considered as part of the consultation evaluation.

- Religion of belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Consultation

Public consultation took place in 2017.

The first consultation closed in April 2017 established how the Park and Ride service is used. Respondents were asked how often they use the service, for what purpose and their satisfaction with the service. From a non-user perspective the consultation sought to establish why they do not, currently, use the service.

The second consultation closed in October 2017. This was informed by the first consultation. Users and non-users of the Park and Ride Service responded to questions on their current use of the service. For example how frequently they use the service, including the days and times they use the service. Users and non-users also responded to a number of questions on a variety of service and financial models for the Park and Ride Service. Questions were also included on daily tariffs for a Park and Ride service and Pay to Park service.

Options for decision

The Park and Ride review and consultations have formed part of tri-study which included a bus interchange study and parking strategy. A report will be taken forward, proposing the following options and recommending a combination of these options for decision.

The table below identifies where there could be an impact on Park and Ride users with protected characteristics based on a combination of service user data and user response to consultation. The impact is then considered in more detail by protected characteristic.

Tri-Study (including Park and Ride) report for decision	Disproportionate Impact on Protected Characteristics			
Options for decision	Age	Sex	Disability	Race
1. Accept the best tender return to run the Park and Ride service for 7 years with buses at 15 min intervals, increase the duration of the service and implement a revised pay to ride tariff	None	None	None	None
2. Accept the best tender return to run the Park and Ride service for 7 years with buses at 20 min intervals, increase the duration of the service and implement a revised pay to ride tariff	None	None	None	None
3. Extend the current contract for one year, increasing bus frequency and duration of the service and implement a	None	None	None	None

revised pay to ride tariff				
4. Extend the current contract for one year, increasing bus frequency and duration of the service and introduce a pay to park charging structure	Yes	None	None	None
5. Discontinue Park and Ride, consider future options for the sites and invest the saving in alternative sustainable transport measures	None	None	None	None

Age

Park and Ride consultation respondents below the age of 54 are notable lower in numbers than the population average. Those aged 55 + are much higher. Service user data shows that Older Person's Bus Pass holders account for 61.6% of users

Option 1 – Positive increase in service to all users. No evidence base to show this will advantage any age group more than another.

Option 2 – Positive increase in service to all users. No evidence base to show this will advantage any age group more than another.

Option 3 – Will negatively impact off-peak users. No evidence base to show this will advantage any age group more than another.

Option 4 – Will negatively impact those of a pensionable age who receive concessionary fares, as they will have to pay for parking when previously they would have received the entire service free

Option 5 – Will negatively impact all users but no evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage any age group more than another.

Sex

Female users make up a higher proportion of consultation respondents at 64%. Male users are notably lower when compared to the population average at 35%. Women could therefore be affected more than men by changes to the current service, however there is not solid evidence that this is the case and the split between sex could change for a number of reasons over time.

Option 1 – Positive increase in service for all users. Female users possibly make up a higher proportion of all users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage either sex disproportionality.

Option 2 – Tariffs will change for all users however, Female users possibly make up a higher proportion of all users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage either sex disproportionality.

Option 3 – Tariffs will change for all users however, Female users possibly make up a higher proportion of all users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage either sex disproportionality.

Option 4 – The pay to park will affect all users, Female users possibly make up a higher proportion of all users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage either sex disproportionality

Option 5 – Will negatively impact all users Female users possibly make up a higher proportion of all users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage either sex disproportionality.

Disability

13% of Park and Ride users in the consultation said they had a disability; this is lower than the working age population average at 16% disproportionality.

Option 1 – Positive increase in service for all users. Disabled users possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage disabled users disproportionality.

Option 2 – Tariffs will change for all users however, Disabled users possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage disabled users disproportionality.

Option 3 – Tariffs will change for all users however, Disabled users possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage disabled users disproportionality.

Option 4 – The pay to park will affect all users, Disabled users possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage disabled users disproportionality.

Option 5 – Will negatively impact all users Disabled users possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage disabled users disproportionality.

Race

0.3% of users who responded to the consultation were BME and 97% were from white groups. There are significantly less users from a BME background compared with the population average of 9.2 %.

Option 1 – Positive increase in service for all users. Users from a BME group possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage BME users disproportionality.

Option 2 – Tariffs will change for all users however, Users from a BME groups possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage BME users disproportionality.

Option 3 – Tariffs will change for all users however, Users from BME groups possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage BME users disproportionality.

Option 4 – The pay to park will affect all users, from BME groups possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage BME users disproportionality.

Option 5 – Will negatively impact all users from BME groups possibly make up a lower proportion of users but no solid evidence base to show this will advantage or disadvantage BME users disproportionality.

Conclusion

There is very little evidence to support that a change to the park and ride service will negatively impact equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Users who qualify for an Older Person's Bus Pass and are of a pensionable age are over represented as service users when compared to the population average.

61.6% of users use an Older Person's Bus Pass. A Pay to Park tariff will affect all users currently using a pass to travel. However, the purpose of the Park and Ride service is to improve air quality by alleviating the volume of traffic travelling into the town centre. Holders of passes will still be able to travel into the centre, free of charge, using another bus service.

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2018

URGENT UPDATE

Agenda Item 13 – Maidstone Tri Study and Park and Ride Operational Review

Please note the update can be seen in bold below.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The tri-study report is agreed for publication.
- 2. Improvements and potential investment into Maidstone bus station be investigated.**
3. The proposed changes to town centre car parking tariffs shown at paragraph 1.57 are agreed.
4. The proposed changes to Park and Ride pay to ride tariffs shown at paragraph 1.66 are agreed.
5. The Park and Ride service continues to be funded for 7 years and the frequency and duration of the service is improved.

Agenda Item 14

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**22 JANUARY
2018**

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2018/19 and setting next year's Council Tax. Following agreement by Council of the Medium Term Financial Strategy at its meeting on 25 October 2017, this report sets out budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Agrees the budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee as set out in Appendix C for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	22 January 2018
Policy and Resources Committee	14 February 2018
Council	28 February 2018

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 1.1 At its meeting on 25 October 2017, Council agreed a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the next five years. The starting point for the MTFS is that budget savings for 2017/18 are on track for delivery, a modest underspend is currently projected for the year as a whole, and the level of reserves is adequate, but not excessive.
- 1.2 The MTFS provides the financial underpinning for the Council's Strategic Plan, in particular the three action areas highlighted for specific focus: a clean and safe environment; regenerating the Town Centre; and a home for everyone, ie tackling homelessness and improving housing supply.
- 1.3 There is a high degree of uncertainty about the external environment. The four year financial settlement to local authorities announced in 2016 has another two years to run. This includes £1.6 million negative Revenue Support Grant payable by the Council to central government in 2019/20, but the four year settlement at least provides a measure of certainty about the Council's funding position in the short term. However, after 2020/21 it remains unclear how any new financial settlement will affect the Council. It is also unclear how the lower level of overall economic growth now projected by the Office of Budget Responsibility will impact the Council.
- 1.4 Given uncertainty about the future, various potential scenarios were modelled in the MTFS, representing (a) favourable, (b) neutral and (c) adverse sets of circumstances. All scenarios assumed that budget savings included within the existing MTFS, set out in Appendix B, can be delivered. Projections were prepared for each of the scenarios modelled and the MTFS stated that budget proposals would be sought to address all the potential scenarios.

Updates to Strategic Revenue Projections

Council Tax

- 1.5 The MTFS assumed in all scenarios that Band D Council Tax would continue to increase by £4.95 per annum, reverting to 2% in 2019/20 when this becomes a greater figure than £4.95.
- 1.6 The other key assumption regarding Council Tax is the number of new properties. The number of new properties has been increasing in recent years, from a low of 0.38% in 2014 to 1.18% in 2016. Assumptions were as follows:

Favourable – 2%
Neutral – 1.5%
Adverse – 1%

- 1.7 The Council Tax base for 2018/19 has now been calculated and is the subject of a separate report on your agenda. This shows an increase of 1.6% in new properties for the year to 20 September 2017. The SRP has been updated to reflect this and the related Council Tax base increase.

Business Rates

- 1.8 Business rates income is highly volatile, owing to the large number of assessments that are subject to appeals. However, the underlying pattern is of continuing growth in business rates income above and beyond the baseline figure assumed in the government's funding settlement. The assumption included in the MTFS of growth of 2% has therefore been retained.
- 1.9 It is likely that as part of any new funding settlement with effect from 2020/21, business rates growth will be reset to zero. In other words, councils will lose the benefit of growth accumulated since the introduction of the present system in 2014, and their share of business rates will be recalculated based on the results of the Fair Funding Review. This review is intended to reset the starting point for local authorities' funding, based on their respective needs and resources. It will have the effect of redistributing resources away from high business rates growth areas to low growth areas in the short term.
- 1.10 Some of business rates growth is currently being used to fund the Council's economic development activity. Given the volatility of business rates, this source of income is not stable and cannot be predicted with certainty for the future. Accordingly, this feeds into the corporate risk that financial restrictions limit the Council's capacity to promote the borough's future financial growth.

Fees and Charges

- 1.11 The MTFS assumes that fees and charges will increase in line with overall inflation assumptions. Any volume increase is offset by the drag on increases caused by the fact that not all fees and charges are within the Council's control, many being set by statute. This assumption continues to be applied in the updated SRP.
- 1.12 It is assumed that the Planning Fee increases announced by the government in Spring 2017, implementation of which was then delayed by the General Election, will apply for the whole of 2018/19.

Inflation

- 1.13 Inflation continues to be at a higher level than the government's 2% target. The main impact of inflation for the Council will be in its effect on payroll costs. In the Chancellor's Budget Statement on 22 November, pay increases for the public sector were left to be determined based on the recommendations of individual sector pay review bodies. Maidstone Borough Council agrees pay for its staff independently of local government collective arrangements, so is not bound by these. The updated SRP retains

the assumption of a 1% pay increase that was included within the MTFS agreed by Council in October.

Spending Pressures

1.14 Allowance is made in the SRP for known spending pressures. The main additional spending pressures now included are as follows:

Temporary Accommodation £218,000 – The existing MTFS assumed that £118,000 of the additional funding put into Temporary Accommodation in 2017/18 could be withdrawn. Continuing pressures in this area mean that this is not realistic; instead an additional £100,000 will be required, based on current projections.

Loss of interest income £120,000 – Continuing low interest receivable on cash balances means that the budget level of interest is not achievable. To date the recent increase in Bank of England base rates has not led to a corresponding increase in returns available in the market.

Planning enforcement £100,000 – There is currently a backlog of planning enforcement work, so a one-off provision has been included in the MTFS for 2018/19 to allow this to be addressed. This has been funded through a reduction of £100,000 in the provision for Planning appeal costs, which were originally estimated as £500,000 in the MTFS, based on a current assessment of the risks faced. Provision had already been made for Planning appeal costs in the existing MTFS. Whilst the provision will be charged to 2018/19, if necessary any unused provision may be carried forward to subsequent years.

Market £40,000 – The market operated by Maidstone Council at Lockmeadow has consistently under-performed on its income targets. Whilst steps are being taken to develop new income sources, it is considered that a reduction of £40,000 on an ongoing basis should be incorporated into the SRP.

Heather House £25,000 – Communities, Housing & Environment Committee has recently decided to continue operating Heather House as a community hall. Income generated from the hall is currently well below budget levels and although it is hoped that income can be built up again it is appropriate to include a provision for an ongoing shortfall of £25,000.

Chancellor's Budget Statement

1.15 The Chancellor's Budget Statement on 22 November 2018 reflected more pessimistic growth projections from the Office of Budget Responsibility. Whilst the main impact of the reduced growth was offset by projected increases in government borrowing, the implications for general economic growth and for public sector spending are unfavourable.

1.16 The statement included the following announcements relevant to local government:

Housing

- A range of measures were announced, with the intention of increasing the rate of new home construction to 300,000 per annum, including an additional £2.7 billion for the Housing Infrastructure Fund , £1 billion for a new Land Assembly Fund and £630 million for a Small Sites Fund.
- The Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap has been lifted for Councils in areas of 'high affordability pressure'. (This will not benefit non-housing stock owning Councils such as Maidstone).
- Councils may increase the Council Tax Empty Homes premium as an incentive to bring properties back into use.

Business Rates

- The annual business rates increase will now be based on the Consumer Prices Index, rather than the higher Retail Prices Index. Given that CPI is running at 3%, this will still mean a significant increase for businesses.
 - The frequency of business rates revaluations will be increased to once every three years, compared with once every five years now.
 - Local government will be fully compensated for the loss of income as a result of these measures.
 - A 100% business rates retention pilot was announced for London, but applications for pilots from outside London, including Kent's, are still under consideration by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 1.17 There were no announcements about future local government funding, so it is not proposed to make any specific updates to the SRP arising from the budget.

Summary

- 1.18 The overall effect of the changes in assumptions set out above is to increase the cumulative budget gap at the end of the five year financial planning period in the neutral scenario from £3.8 million in the MTFS to £4.6 million now. Appendix A sets out the updated neutral scenario Strategic Revenue Projection.
- 1.19 At this stage, given that there have been no fundamental changes required to the MTFS budget assumptions, and given the certainty provided by the four year funding settlement, it is appropriate to plan for the short term on the basis of the neutral budget scenario. However, this assumption will continue to be kept under review, both when finalising the budget for 2018/19 and when updating the MTFS as part of next year's budget process.

Budget Proposals

- 1.20 Budget proposals have been developed in response to the projections set out in the MTFS. Heads of Service were asked to develop proposals both in response to the neutral scenario and to the adverse scenario. 'Neutral scenario' proposals were based on achieving further service efficiencies, increasing income, and investing to generate revenue growth. The 'neutral' budget proposals, if delivered, will ensure that the budget remit of a balanced position for 2018/19 can be secured. Details of budget proposals relating to services within the remit of this Committee are set out in Appendix C.
- 1.21 Two changes have been made to the existing budget proposals within the remit of this Committee that were agreed by Council in March 2017. The saving of £40,000 arising from the reduction in appeals following Local Plan adoption has been re-scheduled from 2018/19 to 2020/21. This is because of the backlog of appeals that relate to the period preceding adoption of the Local Plan. A saving of £50,000 from reduction in Planning Policy work arising from adoption of the Local Plan has been removed as it is not deliverable, given the requirement that has now arisen for the Local Plan to be reviewed by 2020. This saving has been substituted with a new saving proposal totalling £50,000 over the four years 2019/20 to 2022/23, for the funding of staff costs from the Community Infrastructure Levy. This saving is shown in Appendix C. The existing budget proposals, as amended, are set out in Appendix B.
- 1.22 In addition to agreeing the budget proposals set out in Appendix B, Council agreed at its meeting on 1st March 2017 to implement the 20% increase in planning fees that had recently been proposed by the government. This would be used to fund an increase in planning expenditure of £180,000 in 2017/18 and a further £70,000 in 2018/19. At the time of writing, the planning fee increase has not yet been implemented, but it is anticipated that it will be implemented in time to generate a full year's income for 2018/19 with a corresponding increase in expenditure.
- 1.23 The overall effect of the above changes for Planning Service expenditure for 2018/19 will therefore be as follows:

	£
Existing saving – as per Appendix B	-120,000
Expenditure growth – funded by Planning Fee increase	250,000
One-off investment in Enforcement (see para 1.14)	<u>100,000</u>
Net increase in expenditure	<u>230,000</u>

- 1.24 'Adverse scenario' proposals were developed for contingency planning purposes, based on a more radical approach, including service cuts. It is not proposed to explore these options further at this stage, given that the 'neutral' proposals and existing agreed savings proposals are sufficient to meet the budget remit. The 'adverse' budget proposals will be revisited and updated as necessary if it appears that the assumptions on which neutral scenario is based are no longer valid.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Agree the budget proposals relating to this Committee as set out in Appendix C for onward submission to the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - 2.2 Propose changes to the budget proposals for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - 2.3 Make no comment on the budget proposals.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee must recommend to Council at its meeting on 14 February 2018 a balanced budget and a proposed level of Council Tax for the coming year. The budget proposals included in this report will allow the Policy and Resources Committee to do this. Accordingly, the preferred option is that this Committee agrees the budget proposals at Appendix C..
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4. RISK

- 4.1 The Council's MTFS is subject to a high degree of risk and certainty. In order to address this in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each of its meetings.
-

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Policy and Resources Committee received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 28 June 2017 and it agreed the approach set out in that report to development of an updated MTFS for 2018/19 - 2022/23 and a budget for 2018/19.
- 5.2 Policy and Resources Committee then considered a draft MTFS at its meeting on 25 July 2017, which was agreed for submission to Council. The MTFS included descriptions of the different scenarios facing the Council and described how budget proposals would be sought for all scenarios, so that the Council might be suitably prepared for the adverse scenario, as defined. Council agreed the MTFS at its meeting on 25 October 2017.
- 5.3 Detailed budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 13th December 2017 and it was noted that they would be considered by the relevant Service Committees, including this Committee, during January 2018. Residents' and businesses' views will also be sought.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The timetable for setting the budget for 2018/19 is set out below.

Date	Meeting	Action
13 December 2017	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree initial 18/19 budget proposals for consideration by Service Committees
January 2018	All Service Committees	Consider 18/19 budget proposals
14 February 2018	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree 18/19 budget proposals for recommendation to Council
28 February 2018	Council	Approve 18/19 budget

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. They reflect the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	See section 4 above.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The process of developing the budget strategy will identify the	Section 151 Officer &

	level of resources available for staffing over the medium term.	Finance Team
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget and development of the MTFS and the strategic revenue projection in the ways set out in this report supports achievement of a balanced budget.	Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	Adopting a budget has no incremental impact on privacy and data protection. All budgetary data is held in line with current policies and procedures.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Equalities	Where appropriate, Equalities Impact Assessments are carried out for specific budget proposals.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Procurement	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Strategic Revenue Projection
- Appendix B: Budget Proposals in existing MTFS (updated)
- Appendix C: New Budget Proposals – Neutral Scenario

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

**REVENUE ESTIMATE 2018/19 TO 2022/23
STRATEGIC REVENUE PROJECTION (Neutral)**

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
AVAILABLE FINANCE						
14,828	COUNCIL TAX	15,265	15,803	16,357	16,924	17,505
	TARIFF / TOP-UP ADJUSTMENT		-1,589	-1,589	-2,889	-2,889
3,044	RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	3,142	3,254	3,319	3,385	3,453
1,025	BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	1,035	1,046	0	500	500
18,897	BUDGET REQUIREMENT	19,442	18,514	18,088	17,921	18,569
19,293	OTHER INCOME	19,489	19,707	19,897	20,090	20,285
38,190	TOTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE	38,931	38,221	37,985	38,011	38,854
EXPECTED SERVICE SPEND						
36,500	CURRENT SPEND	38,190	38,931	38,221	37,985	38,011
	INFLATION INCREASES					
560	PAY, NI & INFLATION INCREASES	629	640	658	677	696
	NATIONAL INITIATIVES					
25	LOSS OF ADMINISTRATION GRANT	100				
0	PENSION DEFICIT FUNDING	34	36	150	150	150
180	REINVEST PLANNING FEE INCREASES	70				
	LOCAL PRIORITIES					
94	HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION	36				
	MAIDSTONE HOUSE RENT INCREASE	40	40			
235	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	100				
200	REPLACE CONTINGENCY					
50	MUSEUM					
200	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW					
	PLANNING APPEALS	400	-400			
	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT	100	-100			
96	MOTE PARK CAFÉ - REVIEW OF OPTIONS	-56				
	LOSS OF INTEREST INCOME	120				
	MARKET - LOSS OF INCOME	40				
	HEATHER HOUSE - LOSS OF INCOME	25				
	REVENUE COSTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	261	374	547	590	433
50	GROWTH PROVISION	50	50	50	50	50
38,190	TOTAL PREDICTED REQUIREMENT	40,140	39,571	39,626	39,452	39,340
	SAVINGS REQUIRED	-1,209	-1,349	-1,641	-1,441	-486
	SAVINGS PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED	928	476	159	26	
	ADJUST AND REPROFILE EXISTING SAVINGS	-325	150	65	0	
	SUB-TOTAL - BUDGET GAP	-606	-723	-1,417	-1,415	-486
	CUMULATIVE BUDGET GAP	-606	-1,330	-2,746	-4,161	-4,647

Note: £875,000 Other Income previously netted off 'Current Spend' in 17/18 is now shown gross, ie both Other Income and Current Spend increase by £875,000.

Description	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Savings arising from Planning Review	120				120
Reduction in appeals following Local Plan adoption			40		40
5% increase in Parking income (to be agreed under fees & charges report)			100		100
Re-specify Park & Ride and deliver at reduced cost		75			75
Remove grants as part of voluntary sector grants reduction strategy	16	16	16	15	63
SPST Total	136	91	156	15	398

Description	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Increase Pay & Display income budget (Fees & Charges)	200	50	50	50	50	400
Offset staff costs with CIL		5	15	15	15	50
Increase in Local Land Charges fee income (Fees & Charges)	50					50
SPST Total	250	55	65	65	65	500

Agenda Item 15

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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