

Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee

8 November 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Maidstone Transport Operators Group

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jennie Ward, Transport Planner, Spatial Policy
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All Wards

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee instruct Maidstone Borough Council Officers to set up the first meeting of the Group, following the resolutions of the 8th March SPS&T Committee and the scope and attendance contained within this report. Members are also asked to nominate representative(s) to the Group

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

The Maidstone Transport Operators Group would seek to improve transport provision within the borough which will support the adopted Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. The Group will focus on strategic transport issues.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 November 2016

Maidstone Transport Operators Group

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the establishment of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group. Information is provided regarding the role of the group, as well as possible attendees. The committee is asked to agree to the setting up of the first meeting of the group per the preferred option set out in Section 4 of this report.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the 8 March 2016 Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation (SPS&T) Committee, the establishment of a Maidstone Transport Operators Group was considered.
- 2.2 The Committee initially considered the re-establishment of the Maidstone Transport Users Group, which had regard to day to day operational issues and provided a link between the Parish Councils and the Service Operators.
- 2.3 During the March SPS&T Committee meeting the following issues were raised in regards to a potential transport group:
- That clear Terms of Reference would be needed for the Group;
 - The Group should not discuss specific service issues and should focus on strategic public transport issues;
 - The suggested membership of the Group should not be weighted in favour of parish councils;
 - That bus service operators should be included as members;
 - Clear lines of communication for the Group would be required; and
 - Duplication of work carried out by other Groups should be avoided.
- 2.4 It was therefore concluded that the group should be a Transport Operators Group as opposed to a Transport Users Group and that service users would be represented by an attendee from the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). It was resolved that a Maidstone Transport Operators Group be established, as well as other matters regarding the operation of the group¹.
- 2.5 It is apparent that the group would provide a forum for the key public transport operators in Maidstone to meet and discuss strategic issues which may impact upon all of their services. Other groups do not consider both bus and rail services together at this strategic level.
- 2.6 However, other groups consider these modes individually but primarily focus on more detailed, day to day issues. The groups are:
- Kent Community Rail Partnership;
 - Quality Bus Partnership; or
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- South East Rail Passenger Group.
- 2.7 In respect of attendance, the Committee is asked to consider who would be represented on the Group. Invitations to establish the membership of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group would be extended to the following, in addition to appointed Maidstone Councillors:

Organisation	Initial Point of Contact	Interest in Group
Maidstone Borough Council Officers	Andrew Thompson	To run the Group on a quarterly basis
Kent County Council Officers	Stephen Pay	Impact of decisions from the perspective of the Highway Authority
Arriva	Emma Taylor	To represent the major bus operator in Maidstone and coordinate with Southeastern
NuVenture	Norman Kemp	To represent one of the smaller bus operators in Maidstone and coordinate with Southeastern
Southeastern Rail	Nina Peak	To represent the rail operator in Maidstone and coordinate with bus operators
Highways England	Kevin Bown	Impact of strategic decisions on the motorway and trunk road network
1 representative from KALC	Geraldine Brown	Representing Service Users

- 2.8 It has also been recommended by Stephen Pay of Kent County Council that the local NHS Trust be invited to attend.
- 2.9 The Group would be set up and run by Maidstone Borough Council Officers from Planning Policy with support from Democratic Services. Quarterly reports to the SPS&T Committee from the Maidstone Transport Operators Group would be provided. The reports would be prepared by Maidstone Borough Council Officers.
- 2.10 For each meeting two days of time would be required from a Planning Policy Officer at a cost of £280 (assuming an hourly rate of £20) for preparatory work, to attend the meeting, to write up meeting minutes and to address follow up actions. Half a day's support would also be required from Democratic Services (£70). The total cost of each meeting to Maidstone Borough Council would therefore be £350.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are two options available to Members. Firstly, the Maidstone Transport Users Group could be established with clear Terms of Reference

agreed at the first meeting to include the appointment of a Maidstone Borough Councillor as Chairman of the Group. This would provide a quarterly forum where the key public transport operators in Maidstone could meet and discuss strategic issues which may impact upon all of their services. In this option, Members are also asked to nominate representative(s) to the Group

3.2 Alternatively, strategic transport issues, covering both buses and rail, could be dealt with at one of the existing groups attended by Services Operators and Maidstone Borough Council Officers / Councillors namely:

- Kent Community Rail Partnership;
- Quality Bus Partnership; or
- South East Rail Passenger Group.

3.3 There is a possibility that the membership and terms of reference of one of the above listed Groups could be altered to cover both bus and rail services.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The preferred option is for Members of the Committee to instruct Maidstone Borough Council Officers to set up the first meeting of the Group, following the resolutions of the 8th March SPS&T Committee and the scope and attendance contained within this report. Members are also asked to nominate representative(s) to the Group.

4.2 This option would help to improve the provision of public transport services in the borough as well as supporting the Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy.

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

5.1 Should the Committee decide to instruct Maidstone Borough Council Officers to set up the first meeting of the Group, those organisations (via the initial point of contact) listed in this report, as well as potentially the local NHS Trust will be contacted and the first meeting will be arranged.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Maidstone Transport Operators Group will seek to improve transport provision within the borough which will	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development

	help to support the Integrated Transport Strategy. The Group will focus on strategic transport issues.	
Risk Management	The formation of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group was a recommendation for the SPS&T Committee to consider following a Scrutiny Review of Transport in Maidstone during 2014/15.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Financial	The cost of each meeting of the Group will be £350 to Maidstone Borough Council. This will be met within existing resources.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	A Maidstone Borough Council Officer from the Planning Policy team will be instructed to set up and attend the Group with support from Democratic Services. Approximately 2.5 days of staff time will be required for each meeting.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Legal	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Kate Jardine Team Leader Planning Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	The Maidstone Transport Operators Group will take into account the needs of all user groups and will help to improve access to public transport services for all	Anna Collier Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The Maidstone Transport Operators Group will help to promote public transport travel	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Community Safety	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Human Rights Act	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Procurement	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development

Asset Management	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
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7. REPORT APPENDICES