

**STRATEGIC PLANNING
SUSTAINABILITY &
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

14TH March 2017

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

Yes

Maidstone Future Park and Ride Provision and Town Centre Parking Strategy

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transport Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Egerton, Planning Policy Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To instruct officers to undertake the parking strategy and park and ride study concurrently with the bus interchange study
2. To resolve to consider a future report once initial findings of the bus interchange study, park and ride study and parking strategy have been established and preferred options have been identified for recommendation.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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

A co-ordinated approach to future park and ride provision and a town centre parking strategy (in conjunction with improvements to bus interchange facilities within the borough) will support the adopted Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and support the level of growth set out in Maidstone Borough Local Plan. It will also support the Maidstone Strategic Plan by seeking improvements to the transport infrastructure of the borough, through the delivery of the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee	14 th March 2017

Maidstone Future Park and Ride Provision and Town Centre Parking Strategy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the 7th February 2017 meeting of this committee, a report was presented on a proposed exercise to investigate bus interchange improvements in the borough, focussed on the existing bus station. Officers also introduced the principle of two other potential work areas – a park and ride study and parking strategy.
 - 1.2 The committee provided an instruction to officers to produce a further report setting out information regarding the proposed park and ride study and parking strategy and this forms the basis of this report.
 - 1.3 Members are asked to:
 - Instruct officers to undertake the parking strategy and park and ride study concurrently with the bus interchange study
 - Agree to consider a future report to the committee once initial findings of the bus interchange study, park and ride study and parking strategy have been established.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Proposals for a Maidstone bus interchange study were approved by this committee on 7th February 2017. Members received an urgent update report that briefly set out two other areas of proposed work - a park and ride study and town centre parking strategy. The urgent update report set out that all three studies would address similar, cross-cutting themes and require specialist transport input. It therefore proposed to run all three work areas concurrently.
- 2.2 In response to the above, members agreed a study to instigate preferred options to improve borough-wide bus interchange facilities in the borough on the basis that work on a park and ride study and Maidstone town centre parking strategy also be incorporated. This approach allowed consideration of multi-modal journey planning at a borough-wide level and an integrated approach to transport provision in the future.
- 2.3 This report provides further information regarding the proposed park and ride study and Maidstone town centre parking strategy.
- 2.4 The park and ride study will align with the adopted Integrated Transport Strategy. 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.”

- 2.5 It will lead from and complement an existing study into park and ride that seeks to make a short term evaluation of the current service. The current Park and Ride contract comes to an end on 31 May 2018. There is an assumption that £75K saving will be made from the Park and Ride service for 2018/19, which is crucial to the council delivering its medium term financial strategy. Therefore, a more operational commissioning review of Park & Ride is currently being carried out to inform the decision on how the council should proceed with Park and Ride in the short to medium term i.e. whether the contract should be retendered when the current contract expires and, assuming the council continues to provide the service, what the optimum service should look like. The review is being managed by the Service Improvement Manager with senior management leadership from the Director of Finance and Business Improvement and will report back to SPST for decision in June 2017.
- 2.6 Therefore, the current short term operational Park and Ride review and the proposed strategic study to inform Park and Ride in the long term are both required. Officers will work together to make sure that the two pieces of work are complementary to one another and that work is not duplicated. In drawing from the existing study, the proposed study will assess the purpose, role and future patronage of existing facilities.
- 2.7 Fundamentally, it will take into account current and future population increases, potential development and its implications, including highlighting opportunities for regeneration and redevelopment.
- 2.8 In a similar vein to the bus interchange study, the overall output is intended to be the generation and justification of a preferred option (or options) regarding future park and ride provision in the borough, including means of optimising service provision, usage and income.
- 2.9 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. This study would allow for consideration of what measures might be introduced to encourage long-stay parking into the larger edge-of-centre car parks and to establish whether there is any scope for rationalisation of existing provision. It would also need to consider car parks that are located on the edge of the town centre but not contained within the town centre boundary itself.
- 2.10 The strategy would use evidence that is held by the Council, including car park provision and income. However, it is also possible that additional survey work could be required, to assess the nature of car park usage and capacity, for example. Where there would be a clear benefit from doing so, surveying may also consider the extent of nearby on-street parking provision, which isn’t subject to residents only restrictions.

- 2.11 As with the other two areas of work, the strategy would take into account and facilitate current and future development in the borough, as well as current and future population changes. It would also allow for consideration of any potential future use of car park sites. This includes providing evidence to support the delivery of housing allocations in the local plan that are currently car park sites.
- 2.12 The overall output is intended to be the generation and justification of a preferred option (or options) regarding all future town centre car park provision, as well as charges and usage. Where possible, the intention is for evidence and proposals to be disaggregated into parking types e.g. Coach, car, short-stay, long-stay, disabled, resident permit.
- 2.13 Overall, given the potential overlap and the technical nature of these work areas, it is apparent that by combining them there will be significant potential savings. In addition, the production of an integrated, single report should ensure clear consideration of multi-modal journey planning and assess potential improvements to multi-modal interchange facilities at a borough-wide level, including with rail services, and consider out-of-borough patronage, including inter-urban journeys.
- 2.14 The Council already holds a reasonable amount of current information regarding the park and ride service and town centre parking provision and would work with stakeholders to gain additional information on all work areas. This should help limit the costs associated with commissioning specialist transport advice, ensure co-ordination is maximised and facilitate clear cross-referencing between each work area and recommendations.
- 2.15 Furthermore, combining the work areas will provide the opportunity to produce an integrated approach with a longer time horizon and, whilst this is intended for discussion with transport specialists, a 20 year maximum horizon may assist with evidence that could be used for a Local Plan Review.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are two options available to Councillors. The first option is to decline to take forward the park and ride study and the Maidstone town centre parking strategy. This would mean that the bus interchange study would be taken forward without detailed information on these other two work areas.
- 3.2 The second option is to take forward the park and ride study and the Maidstone town centre parking strategy concurrently with the previously agreed bus interchange study. This would allow integration of all three work areas from inception to reporting, including discussion with stakeholders.
- 3.3 If the second option is chosen, the combined work areas would use transport planning consultants.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is for members of the committee to instruct officers to take forward the park and ride study and the Maidstone town centre parking strategy concurrently with the previously agreed bus interchange study. This would allow integration of all three work areas from inception to reporting, including discussion with stakeholders.
- 4.2 A future report would be taken to the committee, once an options appraisal had been undertaken and preferred options identified.

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 If the committee instruct officers to take forward the park and ride study and the Maidstone town centre parking strategy concurrently with the previously agreed bus interchange study, it is proposed to commission transport planning consultants to undertake relevant technical work, including modelling and include discussion with stakeholders. Budgets have not been set aside to undertake and deliver this project. Corporate Leadership Team will sign off funding once there is more clarity as to the intended course of action.
- 5.2 It is proposed to present findings of this exercise to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, with further recommendations regarding approval and implementation of preferred options.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	A co-ordinated approach to the three work areas, including generation of preferred options would play a key role in seeking improvements to transport provision in the Borough, which will support the adopted Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. It will also support the Maidstone Strategic Plan by seeking improvements to the transport infrastructure of the borough.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Risk Management	There are no significant risks associated with investigating preferred options regarding the work areas	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Financial	There is a saving of £75,000 on the Park and Ride Service, effective from 2018/19 in the	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer &

	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy, which will need to be delivered as part of the work outlined in this report. Work to generate preferred options would be undertaken in house and by specialist transport planning consultants. Budgets have not been set aside to undertake this work. Corporate Leadership Team will sign off funding once there is more clarity as to the intended course of action.</p>	Finance Team
Staffing	<p>Work to establish preferred options would be managed in house with advice from specialist transport planning consultants.</p>	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Legal	<p>No specific implications arise from this report</p>	Estelle Culligan, Interim Head of Legal Partnership
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	<p>A co-ordinated approach to the work areas, including generation of preferred options would play a key role in seeking improvements to transport provision in the Borough, which would benefit all sections of the community.</p>	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	<p>A co-ordinated approach to the work areas, including generation of preferred options would play a key role in seeking improvements to transport provision in the Borough, which would deliver various forms of sustainability benefits, including improvements to air quality and would complement measures in the Integrated Transport Strategy and Local Plan.</p>	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Community Safety	<p>A co-ordinated approach to the work areas, including generation of preferred options would play a key role in</p>	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)

	seeking improvements to transport provision in the Borough, which would potentially help delivery improvements to community safety.	
Human Rights Act	There are no specific impacts or issues	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
Procurement	Specialist consultant advice will be required. Consultants would be appointed in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development) & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Asset Management	The work areas would consider sites that are included in the Council's property portfolio	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)

7. REPORT APPENDICES

7.1 No appendices are attached to this report.
