

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

10 April 2018

Alternative Sustainable Transport Measures Scope

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| Final Decision-Maker | Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee |
| Lead Head of Service/Lead Director | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Tay Arnold, Planning Projects and Delivery Manager, Strategic Planning |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

Following the report to this committee on 22 January 2018 on the outcomes of both the Tri-study and the Park and Ride operational review, amongst other things the Tri- Study confirmed that the Park & Ride service currently requires £240k of subsidy per annum, and for this it encourages 165,000 vehicles not to enter the town centre each year. As a result of this, Committee resolved that "a full report be brought to this Committee by October 2018 which sets out the alternative sustainable transport options and which measures the success or otherwise of Park and Ride based on peak usage." This report outlines the proposed scope for the future report on alternative sustainable transport options. The purpose of this work is to identify what alternative sustainable transport measures are possible and what interventions or facilitation by MBC could increase uptake i.e. more vehicles out of the town centre (especially at peak time) and look to estimate the cost of any intervention for the same or less money. This report sets out a provisional schedule of what the alternatives might be, and how, if possible, they will be evaluated in terms of their likely cost and likelihood of success.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the scope for work be agreed and Officers be instructed to commence work.
2. That a report of the outcomes be brought to committee in December alongside the measures of the success or otherwise of Park and Ride.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--|---------------|
| Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee | 10 April 2018 |

Alternative Sustainable Transport Measures Scope

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 22 January 2018 a report was brought to this committee on the outcomes and findings of both the tri-study (bus interchange study, parking strategy and strategic Park and Ride study) and the Park and Ride operational review. Amongst other things the Tri- Study confirmed that the Park & Ride service currently requires £240k of subsidy per annum, and for this it encourages 165,000 vehicles not to enter the town centre each year. As a result of this, it was resolved that "a full report be brought to this Committee by October 2018 which sets out the alternative sustainable transport options and which measures the success or otherwise of Park and Ride based on peak usage." This report outlines the scope for the investigation of alternative sustainable transport options to inform this future report. The scope outlined below will not be a review of Park and Ride and not cover the details of how the success or otherwise of Park and Ride will be measured. However the outcomes of the outlined work below will be brought to SPST alongside the Park and Ride data in a future report. The purpose of this work is to identify what alternative sustainable transport measures are possible and what interventions or facilitation by MBC could increase uptake i.e. more vehicles out of the town centre (especially at peak time) and look to estimate the cost of any intervention for the same or less money. This report sets out a provisional schedule of what the alternatives might be, and how, if possible, they will be evaluated in terms of their likely cost and likelihood of success.
- 1.2 The Council has an important role to deliver the adopted Local Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy. Most importantly in the context of this report, to provide sustainable transport measures as outlined in Local Plan Policy SP23 (Sustainable Transport). 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". 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.
- 1.3 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".
- 1.4 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.

- 1.5 The report in January included WSP's Tri-study report and alongside 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.
- 1.6 Replacing existing dedicated P&R bus services with existing urban bus services was also reviewed as part of the WSP Tri-Study. The review confirmed that "the services near Willington Street 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 metre 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 routing, thus increasing travel time for existing passengers." Micro Park and Ride was also dismissed as not being viable at the moment unless new sites can be identified.
- 1.7 It is not proposed that this investigation of alternatives focusses on the above options as they have already been dismissed, however if new evidence comes forward that changes the viability they will be considered.
- 1.8 It is proposed that the investigation concentrates on two key themes: available alternative sustainable transport options; and whether these options provide a suitable alternative for both current Park and Ride users as well as current peak time commuters who do not currently travel into Maidstone Town Centre by a sustainable method.
- 1.9 The ITS provides a framework and programme of schemes and interventions to support the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, taking account of the committed and predicted levels of growth in homes and jobs and detailing the transport infrastructure and services necessary to support and deliver this growth. Objective 1 of the ITS focusses on 'Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices'. Of particular relevance to the scope of this work the ITS proposes:
 - The development, maintenance and enhancement of walking and cycling provision, through network improvements and encouraging uptake amongst the population
 - The development, maintenance and enhancement of public transport provision, including Park and Ride, encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- 1.10 The ITS outlines targets to monitor its success in achieving its objectives. Of particular relevance to the scope of alternative sustainable transport measures is the target to "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.”

- 1.11 It is proposed that the identification of alternative options focusses on those outlined in the ITS, specifically those relating to buses, rail, cycling, walking and other forms of transport such as car clubs. This will take in to account existing provision as well as exploring the action list outlined in the ITS such as PT2 to “Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area”. This will then inform a list of potential sustainable options for the key Maidstone corridors. It is also proposed that potential future deliverable sustainable options are also identified. This work in turn will identify potential opportunities for Maidstone to support the uptake of current provision as well as facilitate the delivery of additional measures.
 - 1.12 The second part of the work will look at profiling the current P&R users with a focus on understanding both their origin and destination and times of travel. This analysis will allow the current users to be classified into different groups based on their travel patterns and needs. This analysis will enable us to identify if Park and Ride in its current format offers the best sustainable transport option and whether a reasonable alternative sustainable method for those users can be identified. This will also help identify the main barriers to the current users transferring to an alternative, which in turn will inform the need for potential improvements or new sustainable alternatives to encourage modal shift.
 - 1.13 To inform the overall work the current data will be reviewed, specifically in relation to understanding the travel patterns of existing Park and Ride users. It is also proposed that this work models the impact of closing Park and Ride using Webtag or similar; and applying the estimated resulting change in the number of cars on road, distance and congestion levels, to quantify the external benefits and dis-benefits, including financial quantification of congestion, accidents, and local Air Quality amongst others.
 - 1.14 Due to the need to bring the report to this committee in October it is unlikely that this work will be able to capture any changes to the profiles of new Park and Ride users resulting from the change to pay to park. This is due to the limited time between the new payment method commencing (1 June 2018) and the report deadline. To fully explore the alternative options and the potential need to provide a suitable alternative to the users of Park and Ride it is important to understand accurately the current users.
 - 1.15 Although it is not the purpose of this report to provide scope for the measurements of success of the Park and Ride, there is a comparable need for an appropriate volume of data to measure the changes to Park and Ride being implemented from 1 June and therefore this element of the work would also benefit from a change in reporting deadline to the December SPST Committee. This would also enable data to be collected that is not affected by the summer holidays.
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2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 That Committee agrees the proposed scope and instructs officers to commence work with a report brought to committee by October 2018. This option aligns with the previous committee resolution. It does limit the ability to incorporate data related to the profile of any new users, however it would provide sufficient time for a decision to be made on the future of Park and Ride before the current contract extension ends on 31st May 2019.
 - 2.2 That Committee agrees the proposed scope and instructs officers to commence work with a report brought to committee for December 2018, enabling the inclusion of data from users after the changes to Park and Ride have been implemented. This would enable any changes in Park and Ride user profiles to be incorporated in to the work there would still be opportunity to make an informed decision before the end of the current contract extension on 31st May 2019 and implement that decision.
 - 2.3 That Committee requests changes to the scope of the work and instructs officers to bring a future report to Committee outlining the new scope. This option is not recommended as it will delay commencing the work which will impact on the ability to provide a comprehensive report by October 2018.
 - 2.4 That Committee decides to proceed with the investigation of alternative sustainable transport measures. This option is not recommended as this would hinder the future decision on Park and Ride as the measurement of the success or otherwise of Park and Ride would therefore not be seen alongside and in the context of alternative options. This decision would also impact on the Council's ability to deliver the targets within the ITS and Local plan.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Committee agrees the proposed scope and instructs officers to commence work with a report brought to committee December 2018, enabling the inclusion of data from users after the changes to Park and Ride have been implemented. This would enable any changes in Park and Ride user profiles to be incorporated in to the work and there would still be opportunity to make an informed decision before the end of the current contract extension on 31st May 2019 and implement that decision i.e. commence procurement for a new Park and Ride contract or begin preparation to close down the service. This change to the previously resolved deadline would apply to the entire report and so would also include the measures of the success or otherwise Park and Ride based on peak usage, which would also benefit from the change in deadline as October 2018 would only allow approximately 3 months of data on usage to be provided and these would also be affected by the Summer holiday period..
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4. RISK

- 4.1 This report focusses only on the scope of work to be carried out. Risks related to this matter will be detailed in the future report relating to the decision on the future of Park and Ride.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 No specific consultation has been carried out regarding the scope of the work.
- 5.2 This report is as a result of previous committee feedback regarding the need to investigate other sustainable transport options alongside Park and Ride.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Following agreement of the scope officers will procure and appoint a consultant to review the current data and policies and conduct the webtag modelling to inform the evidence base for the future report on alternative sustainable transport measures.
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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. | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development |
| Risk Management | Already covered in the risk section | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development |
| Financial | The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. The work described in paragraphs 1.9 to 1.14 is currently estimated at a maximum of £10,000 and the cost will be met from within existing Strategic Planning budgets. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |

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| Staffing | We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing and by procuring specialist consultants to generate the required evidence base. | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development |
| Legal | There are no legal implications arising from the report or recommendations | Cheryl Parks, Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services |
| Privacy and Data Protection | Care will be needed in handling any customer data, survey responses etc for the purposes of establishing evidence for this work. The Council's policies and procedures should be carefully adhered to in this respect. | Cheryl Parks, Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services |
| Equalities | The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment | [Policy & Information Manager] |
| Crime and Disorder | N/A | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development |
| Procurement | On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for carrying out the work. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules. | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Section 151 Officer |

8. REPORT APPENDICES

N/A

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The previous report on Outcomes of Bus Interchange Study, Parking Strategy and Park and Ride Study, and Park and Ride Operational Review:

https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/your-councillors?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTJGJTJGJbWVldGIuZ3MubWFpZHN0b25lLmdvdi51ayUyRmlITGIZdERvY3VtZW50cy5hc3B4JTNGQ0lkJTnENTc5JTI2TUIkJTnEMjk2MCZhbGw9MQ%3D%3D