

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor Burton (Chairman)
Councillors Cuming, Beerling, Black, English, Mrs Joy,
Ross, Springett and Newton

105. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.

Resolved: That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

106. Apologies.

There were no apologies.

107. Notification of Substitute Members.

There were no substitute Members.

108. Notification of Visiting Members.

Councillor Richard Ash and Councillor Malcolm Robertson indicated their wish to speak on Items 8 and 9.

109. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

There were no disclosures.

110. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

Resolved: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

111. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

112. Park and Ride Update

Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, and Steve Goulette, Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services, gave an update on the Park and Ride figures for 2011/12 (presentation attached).

Councillor Robertson gave the view that town centre parking charges could be adjusted to encourage use of the Park and Ride service, however it was pointed out that Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) does not own all the car parking sites in the town centre and therefore cannot control all charges. Cllr Robertson felt that the Allington to Willington Street 'through' Park and Ride Service was successful, and urged the Committee not to consider including a regular bus service in that Park and Ride service as previously trialled with the No. 71 Arriva bus. He felt that contact should be made with Kent County Council (KCC) to discuss the Park and Ride service at Sittingbourne Road, which involves a costly rental charge, as he felt that this service is largely used by the KCC as a remote staff car park. Cllr Robertson felt that, if the Sittingbourne Road site was no longer used the usage would be redistributed to the other two sites. He highlighted that there would be greater use of the Allington Park and Ride if the predicted number of houses are built in that area. He felt that there was space at Allington and Willington Street to expand in the future.

Councillor Ross gave apologies for his late arrival and said that he felt that there would be problems with gridlock in the town, or people would not travel to the town centre, if the Park and Ride service should be reduced on Saturdays. Jeff Kitson said that if consideration were to be given to reducing a Saturday service, the reduction would be distributed over the three sites.

Councillor Springett suggested that commuters using the motorway into Maidstone may be encouraged to use the Park and Ride service by the effective alteration of the structure of the town centre car park charges. Jeff Kitson replied that the structure of charges was being looked at within the Parking Strategy, but to bear in mind that MBC did not own all of the town centre car parks. Steve Goulette said that it was recognised that there would be 600 more cars travelling to town if one of the Park and Ride sites was closed.

Councillor English felt that the cost and frequency structure of alternative public transport should be considered when setting charges and that, at some point in the future, an alternative to the Sittingbourne Road site should be pursued to reduce the high cost presently incurred there. Cllr English pointed out that there were some areas within walking distance of the town centre that can be used without parking restrictions.

The Chairman commented that as well as KCC staff parking at the Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site, perhaps the MBC staff parking arrangements should be looked at. Steve Goulette commented that there were 'Travel to Work Plans' in place for both KCC and MBC, and that the responsibility for congestion ultimately rested with the KCC as the Strategic Transport Authority. Many other towns in the country have Park and Ride services run by the Strategic Transport Authority and discussions including this matter would be held with KCC. Jeff Kitson added that Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) were being reviewed and discussed with Arriva.

Members were informed that the existing bus contract would run until 2014. Steve Goulette and Jeff Kitson were to have a meeting with Arriva on 09 March 2012 to go through the finer details of the contract and ensure development of services moving forward.

Councillor Richard Ash thought that a major problem with Park and Ride sites was location and, on the west side of town, competition with the railway.

Councillor Beerling asked what was happening with the Bluebell Hill site that was bought by MBC. Steve Goulette replied that the Bluebell Hill site was in a much better location than the present site; however it would be costly to set up. Analysis would be included in the Parking Strategy (which would be completed end of March) along with a number of other sites. Cllr Beerling asked to see the result of the analysis as soon as it was available. Cllr Springett asked if it would be possible to include a bus stop, possibly at the new football stadium, on a Bluebell Hill route. Steve Goulette replied that this was possible as extra bus stops on Park and Ride routes are worked well in other towns.

The Chairman commented that the JMP (Consultants) report would give facts and figures, including cost benefit analysis, relating to many of the areas touched on; however, he did not think the Park and Ride cost of around half a million pounds could continue. Cllr Beerling asked for an executive summary of the JMP report which would be presented by Jonathan Morris. Cllr English pointed out the need to obtain an analysis of revenue and wondered whether any comparisons had been made with reducing costs for socially necessary bus routes. Steve Goulette said that Park and Ride was part of a bigger solution for managing traffic congestion and all options needed to be looked at.

Resolved: To note the information provided by Jeff Kitson and Steve Goulette and to look forward to a future debate following the detailed JMP report.

To view the web-cast of this meeting, please go to:-
<http://clients.westminster-digital.co.uk/maidstone/player2.aspx?EventID=2764>

113. Traffic Congestion Review

Councillor Ash highlighted some grammatical and spelling errors within the draft document.

Councillor Robertson, County Councillor and the official opposition spokesperson at KCC for Highways, thought that the Transport Forum had been useful in the past, with senior KCC officers attending. He would be supporting the Forum being formed again. Cllr Robertson wanted to discuss some of Chris Finch's ideas in the report with KCC; he felt that KCC should have solved the problem of the Southern Approach road but did not agree with taking away the traffic lights at the junction with Medway Street and Fairmeadow because of the urban traffic management

system. Cllr Robertson pointed out that there were a number of letters from the public complaining about being held up in traffic, in particular the London Road. He highlighted the fact that the traffic light sequence worked with the traffic management on the gyratory system.

With regard to Item 101, bullet point 3, page 2 of the Minutes of 31 January 2012, "... at the junctions of Buckland Hill, Leafy Lane and Queens Road with London Road be used as an example of where better information through the use of cameras and traffic sensors etc. would assist the staff in the Traffic Control Centre ..."; Cllr Robertson pointed out that a camera had been in place there for around eighteen months.

Cllr Beerling stressed that MBC had not received support from KCC Highways and they did not respond to requests to attend meetings; Cllr Robertson suggested that a letter explaining this situation should be sent to the KCC Cabinet Member, Cllr Sweetland, and the Leader of the KCC, Cllr Paul Carter. The Chairman hoped that circulation of the completed report would enable all concerned to realise that the Borough and the County Council should work 'hand-in-glove'.

Resolved:

- a. That the following amendment be agreed:
 - i. Page 8:-
 - ii. "That a platform be found to enable dialogue between public transport providers and users".
- b. That feedback be given to the public regarding the comments received from them included in the document and that they be informed that the traffic light sequence causing queues in the approaches to the town is designed to relieve the pressure of traffic and improve air quality within the town.
- c. That wording be drafted from bullet points 4 and 5 of item 101 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012 and included in the Report at Page 11.
- d. That the wording on Page 8 of the report referring to 'Operation Stack' be redrafted and strengthened.
- e. That the Chairman and Vice Chairman redraft the document and circulate it electronically to enable comments to be considered in advance of the Agenda with a view to the next meeting being conclusive.

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114. Future Work Programme and Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee considered the future work programme. It was noted that the draft Museum Business Plan would be considered at the next meeting on 27 March 2012.

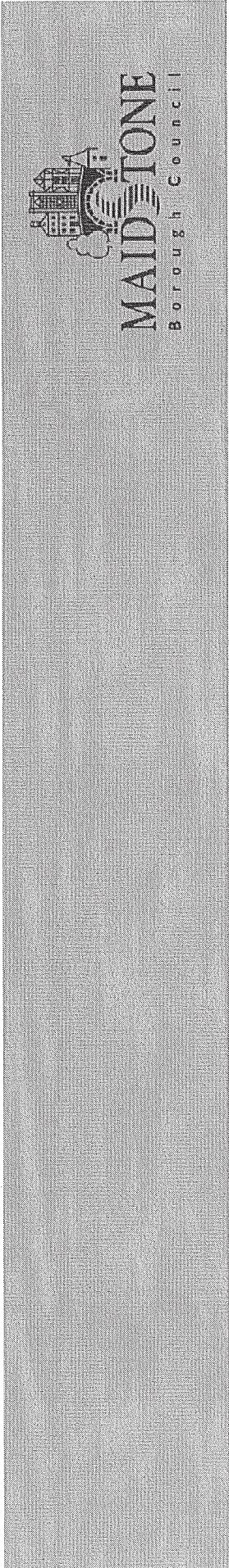
Resolved:

- To leave a discussion regarding the Integrated Transport Strategy: Public Consultation report until after it had been reviewed at the Task and Finish Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- To keep the Tourism item for the 25 April 2012 meeting.

115. Duration of Meeting

6.30pm to 8.15pm.

Park & Ride



Controlled Income

- Season Tickets -£15k
- Willington St -£7k
- London Road -£11k
- Sittingbourne Rd -£58k
- ³• Concessionary fares -£36k

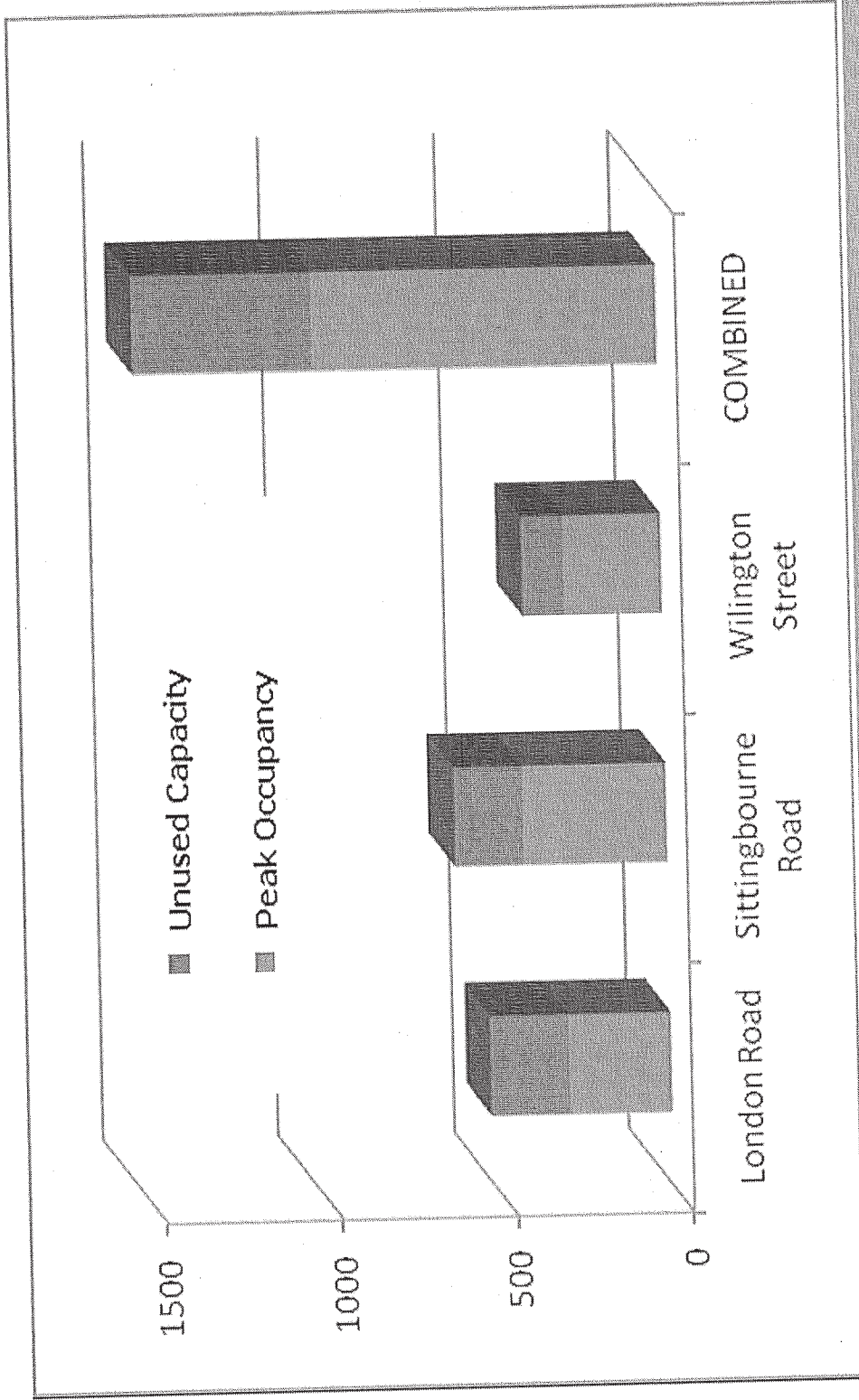
Comparison

- 2011/12 Income -£127k
- 2010/11 Income -£62k*
- Other budget headings comparable

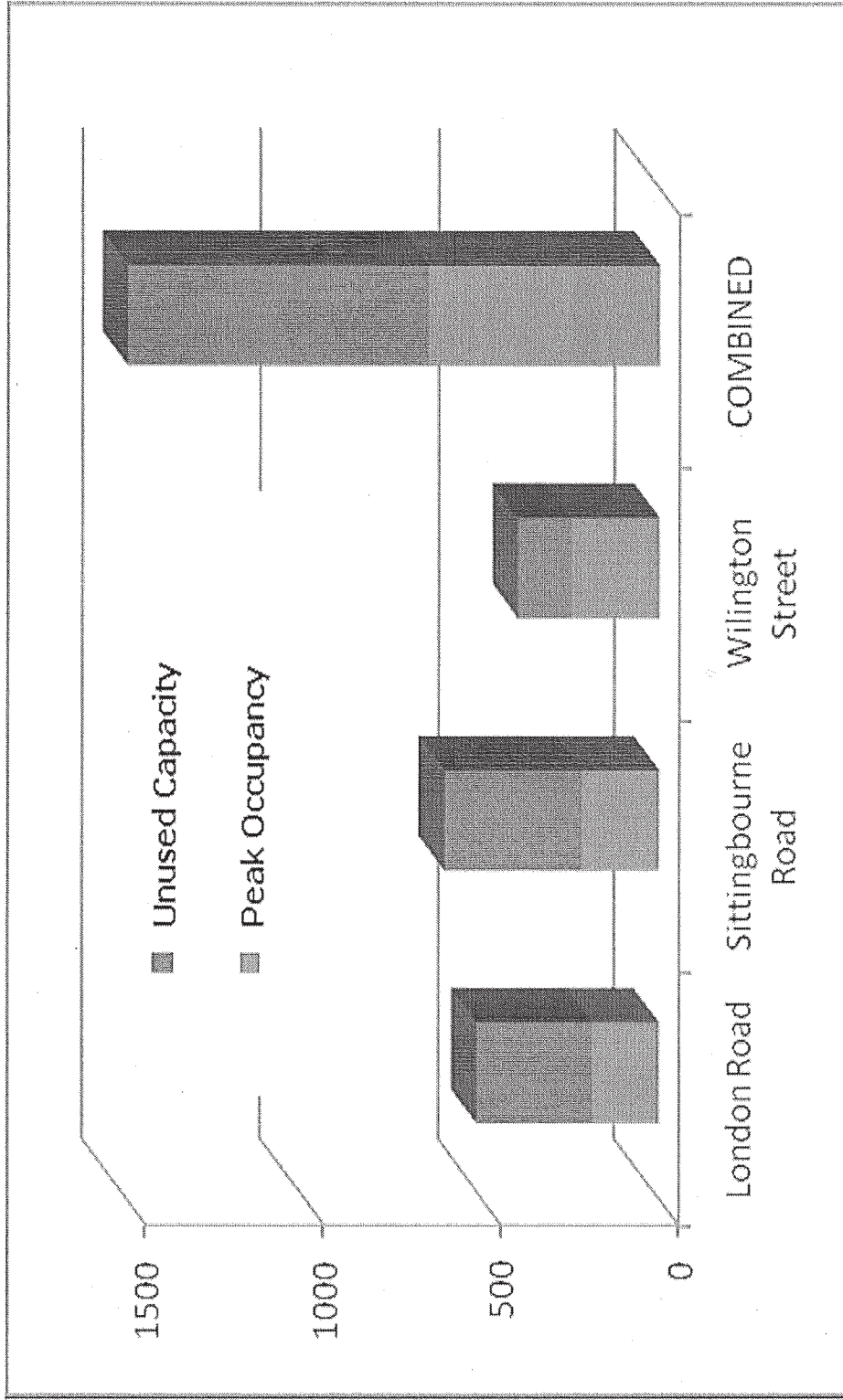
- 4 ■ £772,709 budgeted income
- 8% deficit in 2010/11
- Further deficit of 8.4% in 2011/12
- Total income reduction of 16.4%

*[excludes 106 contribution]

Combined Park & Ride Site Capacity Utilisation – Weekday

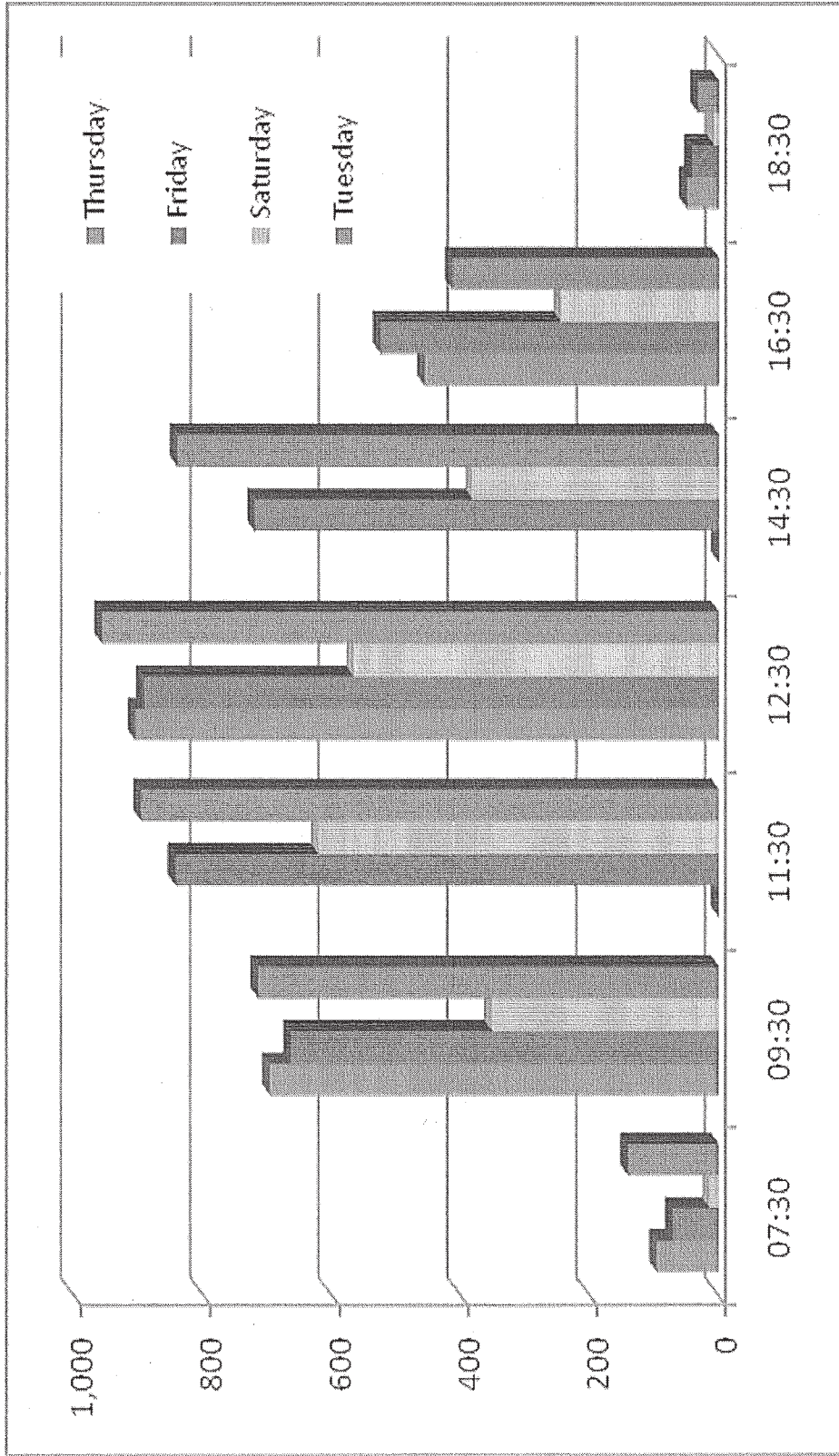


Combined Park & Ride Site Capacity Utilisation – Saturday



Combined Park & Ride Occupancy

[capacity of 1,528 spaces]



Potential savings

Potential Savings Per Site Revised 2011/2012

Description	Mote	London Rd	Sittingbourne	All Sites	Total Saving
Employee Costs-direct	-	-	-	37400	37,400
Rent	-	10,000	141,800		151,800
Rates	18,900	20,320	19,920		59,140
Bus Contract	223,266	296,186	330,447	0	849,899
Other expenditure	5,070	9,910	10,730	18,060	43,770
Season ticket income	-	31,204	55,474	0	115,570
On Bus income	-	126,958	222,652		478,389
Concessionary Fares income	-	73,288	30,388	0	178,750
Recharge	-	-	-	0	-
Total	14,490	104,967	194,384	55,460	369,300

Immediate Investigations

- Off peak reductions [decrease bus frequency]
- No off peak service from selected site/s
- Renegotiate contract terms with Arriva
- Close Park & Ride site/s [promote local bus services]
- Refocus advertising using JMP data from Integrated Parking Strategy research
- No Saturday service from selected/all sites