

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
Date third stage EqIA finalised, prior to final decision on future options for Park and Ride Service following the Pay to Park Pilot Scheme.	October 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			
	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 notably 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.

Final decision on future options for Park and Ride Service following the Pay to Park Pilot Scheme.

On 22 January 2018, Committee resolved to agree a year's extension to the current contract, with a change to Pay to Park from Pay to Ride and an extension of running times of the service to 7pm. In addition a report setting out sustainable transport options was brought back to Committee for decision in April 2018.

To inform the development of alternative transport and to gain an informed understanding of the barriers to the take up of sustainable transport options in the Town Centre, an online consultation was carried out:

- A total of 744 responses were received
- The responses included park and ride users and non-users
- 248 of the responses were from peak-time service users

Identifying equalities impacts

Sex

Respondents to the most recent consultation carried out showed a higher response rate from females than in population overall. 54.91% of respondents were female compared with the population average of 51.2%.

Race

There was a slightly higher response from White British backgrounds at 95.35% compared with the population average of 94.1%.

Age

Age	Population Average	Consultation Response
18-24	9.51%	6.33%
24-34	16.34%	6.98%
35-44	16.55%	16.67%
45-54	18.82%	21.54%
55-64	14.73%	21.06%
64-74	13.3%	20.67%
75+	10.8%	6.72%

Disability

No data was collected in the consultation responses.

Options for decision following the Pay to Park Pilot Scheme

The analysis of the most recent consultation did not breakdown the responses by user and non-user nor did it analyse the equalities data gathered by response to each question.

There is no evidence available on users of the new Pay to Park Service.

The proposed options have not been consulted on.

Following the introduction of the Pay to Park pilot scheme, users who qualified for an Older Person's Bus Pass (and therefore of a pensionable age) were no longer able to use their Bus Pass on the service.

This age group was over represented as service users when compared to the population overall.

It can be assumed that this decision for Older Person's Bus Passes not to be allowed on a Park and Ride or Pay to Park Service going forward would remain in place. Service user data showed that Older Person's Bus Pass holders accounted for 61.6% of users.

The equalities impact can therefore only be considered in relation to the evidence base and data collected prior to January 2018 which showed:

- **Age:** Park and Ride consultation respondents below the age of 54 were notably lower in and responses from those aged 55+ were much higher than in the Maidstone population.
- **Sex:** Female users made up a higher proportion of consultation respondents at 64%. Male users were under represented when compared to the population at 35%. Women could therefore be affected more than men by changes.
- **Disability:** 13% of Park and Ride users in the consultation said they had a disability; this is lower than the working age population at 16%.

- **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 of 9.2 %.

	Disproportionate Impact on Protected Characteristics			
Options for decision	Age	Sex	Disability	Race
1. Re-procures the current pay to park service.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
2. Retains the two car parks, close the current pay to park service and procures a commercial Park & Ride service on a licence arrangement (against a minimum service specification).	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
3. Retain car parks as assets with a modest charge to users and invest in linking them to the town centre via alternative sustainable transport modes	Possible Impact	Possible Impact	Unknown	Unknown
4. Cease the Park and Ride service and closes the two car parks, putting the car parks to alternative use.	Possible Impact	Possible Impact	Unknown	Unknown

Conclusion

The table above details where an impact is possible based on the evidence available which showed that women and older age groups are significantly higher users of the service when compared to the population. Option 2 is the preferred option, this along with option 1 do not suggest significant change to the offer currently available. Options 3 and 4, however suggest significant change and a termination of the service which could impact on two groups with protected characteristics.