

Decision Referral

To:

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

Decision making body

MBC Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee 7th December, 2021

Decision made

24. Park and Ride Service

Decision: Park and Ride Service

Reason for referring the decision

We wish to call in the following decision from the meeting of SPI on 7th December 2021:

24. Park and Ride Service

We feel there is a need to support the Park and Ride sites in Maidstone following the significant reduction in usage during the Covid-19 pandemic. The uncertainty around passenger recovery and future support from the Department of Transport, has led to service provider Arriva being unable to sustain the current position.

However, it is noted (4.2) that Arriva remains committed to the service if they can reach breakeven point and that the company has approached the council to fund any income shortfall up to the service's financial breakeven point.

As a clearer picture of funding from the Bus Recovery Grant and the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme will not be available until April 2022, we feel that the decision made, which does not direct the council to provide any support, will bring about the closure of the service even before these additional external funding options can be considered. It is especially troubling that this decision has been made without any public consultation.

2.5 Fig 1 shows a graph of passenger numbers, against time, from July 2019 to November 2021. The 2021 section of this graph shows a strong and continual upward trend, as lockdown eased, through to the last recording in November. If this trajectory is extended as a straight line, it is likely that breakeven point will be reached in the short term as recovery continues.



Desired outcome (please give full details)

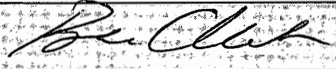
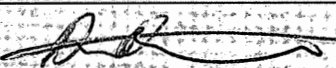
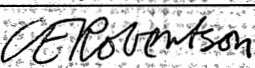
With the increased availability of national grant funding for sustainable transport initiatives, brought about by the pandemic, there are many opportunities which could be developed from the "Park and Ride" service, including the potential for "Park and Cycle" and "Park and Play" at Mote Park along with cycle and scooter hire and storage opportunities, many of which have been raised at SPI.

Allowing a popular "Park and Ride" service to fail due to reduced passenger numbers, clearly brought about by the pandemic, pulls the rug from any such opportunities, and will hinder our drive to improve air quality in the urban area and our target to reach net zero.

To that end is our wish that the council do all within its power to support the park and ride service, providing temporary funding as outlined in 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 and continuing to seek opportunities to encourage the upward trend in passenger numbers:

Members referring the decision

Signed:

1. Brian Clark	
2. Derek Mortimer	
3. Cynthia Robertson	
4.	
5.	

(3 signatories are required to refer a decision of a Service Committee to the Policy and Resources Committee. However, a decision of the Policy and Resources Committee for referral to Council requires 5 signatories in accordance with the Constitution's rules of procedure). Any of the signatories making such a referral shall attend the meeting.

Please note that should new and relevant information come to light, or a more acceptable course of action be proposed which may resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the Committee, then a Committee Chairman, at the request of any three Councillors in writing, may choose whether to call another meeting of the original Committee to re-consider the decision within five working days of receipt of a referral. The referral to Policy and Resources or the Council would then fall away and the matter would be treated as having been dealt with by the original Service Committee. No further referral of the matter would be permitted.

Committee (or Council) responsible for examining this decision

MBC Policy and Resources Committee

