

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**  
**DRAFT MINUTES (PART II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7**  
**DECEMBER 2021**

**129. PARK & RIDE SERVICE**

The Parking Services Manager introduced the report and stated that Arriva was unable to sustain the continuation of the Park and Ride Service in the current climate.

In between the lockdown periods associated with the Covid-19 pandemic the number of daily users had decreased to 400, which had increased slightly to 600 by November 2021; Arriva's breakeven value was achieved through 1100 daily passengers.

The recent promotional offers provided to the public were outlined. Funding had been provided to Arriva through the government's Bus Recovery Grant, alongside reimbursement from Kent County Council through the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme. However, the likelihood of future financial support from 1 April 2022 was unknown and the Council had been requested to provide interim support.

Formal notice had been received from Arriva to terminate the services from the Willington Street and London Road sites from the 19 February 2022. Since publication of the report, Arriva had requested an increased amount of financial support totalling £200,000 across 2022/23, due to increased driver and fuel costs.

The Committee expressed concern at the increase in financial support requested, given that the Council already provided an indirect subsidy to the service through the sites' provision and maintenance. Several Members expressed concern at the prospect of the service's end, due to the importance of and environmental benefits associated with public transport.

In response to questions, the Parking Services Manager confirmed that business rates would still need to be paid if the sites were vacant; there would likely be some adjustment to the controlled and staffing expenses however. The importance of a short-term solution to minimise the site's vacancy was highlighted.

In the event that the service was discontinued, the Director of Regeneration and Place highlighted the importance of suitable press releases and communications to the public. It was suggested that there be a pause between the service's end and the sites permanent re-use, to conduct further research and soft market testing alongside further consideration of the impact of Covid-19. A report outlining the possible short-term uses of the sites would be presented to the Committee at a later date.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That no further subsidy be provided to Arriva; and
2. Officers investigate the best use of the land in the short term with a view to a longer-term solution, whether this be a replacement service or an alternative use to be presented to the Committee at a later date.