

Maidstone Borough Council

Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 14 April 2009

Call-In: Park and Ride Establishment

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Background

1.1. Councillors M Robertson and Daley have called-in the following decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment with regard to the Park and Ride Establishment:

- “1. That the posts of Park and Ride Attendant be removed from the establishment and replaced with two mobile Park and Ride Attendant positions.
- 2. That the Disability Focus Group be consulted regarding the revised operation.”

1.2. In order to assist Members in their consideration of this issue the following documents have been attached to this agenda:

Document
Call-in Form
<i>Report for Decision: Park and Ride Establishment</i>
<i>Record of Decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment</i>

1.3. The Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Mark Wooding and the Parking Services Manager, Jeff Kitson will be in attendance at the meeting for interview.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The reasons for calling-in the Cabinet Member for Environment’s decision are stated as:

“The loss of these posts will result in a major loss of service to the travelling public for the following reasons:

- 1. The reduction in supervision of the car parking arrangements at the sites will result in an unacceptable increase in security risk to the service users’ parked cars. Currently attendants patrol the car parks in a structured way and record their observations throughout

the day. No CCTV system will achieve the same level of security. The deterrent effect of a visible presence will be lost.

2. Lack of supervision of the on-site toilet will lead to the risk of vandalism or its non-availability to the travelling public.
 3. The council will lose its ability to **independently** control the execution of the contract through the continuous monitoring-and-recording function that the attendants carry out that enables a tight on-going audit to be achieved. (This function will have increased importance with the change to using the Arriva 71 Service for part of the day.) This cannot be adequately automated. Visible immediate supervision keeps the standards high.
 4. There will be no one on site to act as a 'meeter and greeter' and able to provide bus service information to the travelling public. The public highly value this reassurance. Complaints can be reported and dealt with immediately and lead to raised satisfaction.
 5. The attendants have **traditionally** acted as assistants to people with walking difficulties and to mothers with children in prams etc. This is broadly in-line with the *Key Tasks* required of the postholders in their JD. This tradition has been known about by past managers and accepted as part of the job. Postholders have not been encouraged to cease to carry out this role. I would submit that any tribunal would accept it as part of the job now.
 6. The loss of all these functions is likely to result in a loss of confidence in the service which is likely to further result in a reduction in patronage and in revenue income to the council. This would also result in an increase in traffic congestion in the town centre.
 7. Consultation with Disabled Groups should take place pre decision and not post decision."
- 2.2. The Committee should consider the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment against the above reason.
- 2.3. Having considered the call-in the Committee has three options for action:
- (i) **Take no action** – the decision will be implemented as taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment on 20 March 2009.
 - (ii) **Refer to the Cabinet Member for Environment** – the comments of the Committee will be referred to the Cabinet Member for Environment for reconsideration of the decision within five working days, after which a final decision will be made.
 - (iii) **Refer to Council** – the comments of the Committee and decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment will be referred to Council. If Council does not object to the Cabinet Member for Environment's

decision it will be implemented. If Council does object, it does not have power to make a decision unless the Cabinet Member for Environment's decision is against the policy framework or contrary to or inconsistent with the budget. Unless that is the case, Council will refer its comments back to the Cabinet Member for Environment for reconsideration of the decision within five working days, after which a final decision will be made.