

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Report prepared by J Kitson

Date Issued: 12th March 2009

1. Park & Ride Establishment

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider a more efficient way of providing the Park & Ride service.

1.2 Recommendation of Assistant Director of Environmental Services

1.2.1 It is recommended that the posts of Park & Ride Attendant be removed from the establishment and replaced with two mobile Park & Ride Attendant positions. This will enable efficiency savings of £100,000 per annum to be achieved.

1.2.2 That the Disability Focus Group be consulted regarding the revised operation.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The continued economic downturn has resulted in the Council having to examine all its services to see if they can be delivered in a more affordable way. The overall subsidy for the Park & Ride operation this financial year is £429,000 and with a turnover in the region of £1,365,000, it is clearly one of the key areas for potential savings to be identified. The Park and Ride service provides the Council with its main weapon in dealing with traffic congestion and air quality issues within the Town Centre so consideration of reducing passenger journeys or the coverage of the service has not been contemplated.

1.3.2 The principal ingredient of the service, the bus service at the sites has recently been tested in the market place and the procurement exercise accrued significant savings to the Council. Therefore this has not been considered as part of this report.

- 1.3.3 The next key cost area is around site security and maintenance and this report proposes arrangements which will significantly reduce costs in this area.
- 1.3.4 Currently seven Park & Ride Attendants are deployed across the three Park & Ride sites located at London Road, Sittingbourne Road and Willington Street. The service handles in the region of 700,000 passengers per annum with an attendant being deployed at each site working on a shift system between 06:30hrs and 19:00hrs Monday to Friday and 07:30 to 19:00 Saturday.
- 1.3.5 It is proposed to reduce the current establishment level from seven to two and to revise working arrangements to include mobile patrols deployed across each of the three Park & Ride facilities.
- 1.3.6 This will enable each site to be unlocked and periodically patrolled by a mobile attendant and made available from 06:30 each day with a handover to a second attendant to enable further patrols and the site to be made secure and locked after the last bus. This can be achieved without an increase in the contracted hours of 37 hours per week for each member of staff.
- 1.3.7 The mobile patrols of each of the Park & Ride sites will be carried out to ensure that:-
- o The sites are opened to ensure that parking facilities are made available to our customers during operational hours and locked after the last bus.
 - o Each facility is maintained to a high standard.
 - o Our customers enjoy a safe and secure environment.
 - o Information is provided to our customers in relation to the service either directly by the attendants or via the notice boards.
 - o Surveys are conducted as required.
 - o Daily maintenance is carried out within each parking facility.
- 1.3.8 The Park & Ride Mobile Attendants will continue to work closely with the bus service provider, the Operation Team, the Public Transport Officer, the CCTV control room, and Council suppliers to ensure the best possible service to our customers.

Impact on users

- 1.3.9 Security will be further supported by the use of CCTV cameras at each site together with increased local signage to raise customer awareness levels and to support existing ParkMark accreditation. This level of maintenance and security is consistent with many other car parks located throughout Maidstone.

- 1.3.10 Service levels can be maintained at each site as all bus enquiries will be handled by the bus service operator.
- 1.3.11 Passengers will be encouraged to contact the Customer Contact Centre in relation to operational matters when an attendant is not on site and an attendant can be deployed where necessary to ensure the Council can respond to customers if required. The attendant will continue to deal with any on site customer comments, complaints and concerns.
- 1.3.12 Access to services for disabled customers should not be reduced as dedicated disabled bays are provided close to the bus stop at each Park & Ride facility. To test this, an Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix A), has been carried out and consultation is recommended with the Disability Focus Group.
- 1.3.13 Although not formally required to assist passengers with disabilities, currently the attendants do help disabled users board the bus and they are also supported by their carers or someone accompanying them on their journey. However, the Park & Ride attendant has never been trained to be responsible for customers accessing the bus. Drivers are currently required to assist all customers with disabilities where it is safe to do so and recognise the needs of people who may require more time to board and alight from the bus, and this will continue.
- 1.3.14 Park & Ride buses are fitted with kneeling suspension and meet the requirements of the Department for Transport, Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000.

- 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended
- 1.4.1 To not revise the current Park & Ride establishment levels would result in the Council having to look elsewhere for savings.

- 1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives
- 1.5.1 The provision of the Park & Ride service is an important issue in terms of the Council's corporate objectives.

- 1.6 Risk Management
- 1.6.1 There is a risk that customers may sense a reduction in service as a result of any change in on site staffing. However the Park & Ride facilities offer an excellent value for money service and the service proposed is comparable to, or better than car park services elsewhere.

1.7 Other Implications

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| 1. | Financial | X |
| a) | Staffing | X |
| b) | Legal | |
| c) | Equality Impact Needs Assessment | X |
| d) | Environmental/Sustainable Development | |
| e) | Community Safety | |
| f) | Human Rights Act | |
| g) | Procurement | |
| h) | Asset Management | |

1.7.1 Financial

1.7.2 Efficiency savings of £100,000 per annum can be achieved through the alternative arrangements as detailed within this report. There will be one off capital costs for CCTV and this provision is included in the capital programme. There are also one off costs in association with terminating contracts of employment. This will be self financing over a short period.

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| Park & Ride Attendant x7 | | Park & Ride Mobile Attendant x2 | |
| Staff costs | £134,820 | Staff costs | £38,920 |
| Overtime | £18,600 | Overtime | £5,500 |
| | | Other costs; | |
| | | Patrol vehicle (lease pa) | £3,000 |
| | | CCTV running costs | £6,000 |
| Total | £153,420 | Total | £53,420 |

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| Capital costs; CCTV | £60,000 |
| Other costs; Redundancy payments *(Redundancy costs will be dependent on potential staff redeployment) | £30,062* (variable) |

1.8 Staffing

1.8.1 Regrettably all seven Park & Ride staff members will be placed at risk of redundancy; however each staff member will be dealt with using the Council's Code of Conduct for organizational change.

1.9 Equality Impact Needs Assessment

1.9.1 The Disability Focus Group will be consulted regarding the proposed operational changes.

1.10 Background Documents

1.10.1 None.

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? _____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

Reason for Urgency

How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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| 1 | Identify the aims of the policy/service/function and how it is implemented. PARK AND RIDE Changes April 2009 | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 1.1 | Is this an existing or a new policy function? | Background to find out if the EqlA is for a new or old policy – may pave the route for the process. | This is an existing service |
| 1.2 | What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy/service/function? | To tease out what the policy/service is trying to actually achieve. | In terms of Equality issues: to provide an accessible park and ride service. Access is currently supported by the bus driver although access cannot be guaranteed without support from a personal helper. The changes from April will not alter this arrangement. |
| 1.3 | What outcomes do you want to achieve with this policy and for whom? | (Possibly make into one question with 1.1 above?) Identifying specifically who the policy is being aimed at and what the key achievements from the policy should be | Clarity for disabled people as to their position. All P&R users will need to be provided with details of the changes. |
| 1.4 | Who is the policy/function being aimed at? | Also lead into if there are any groups who should access this service but do not. Leading from who the policy is aimed at, how and why is it done in this way - to tease out why things are done in a certain way | All P&R users. This includes pedestrians who use P&R without a vehicle to park |
| 1.5 | Who defines or defined the policy/function? | To look into the process that the policy went through, who was consulted etc | MBC. Staff affected have been consulted |
| 1.6 | Who implements the policy/function? | Looking at how wide the implementation of the policy is i.e. different departments/sections, potential for differences in implementation etc | MBC Parking Services |
| | | <i>1.7 How do these outcomes meet or hinder other policies, values or objectives of the public authority</i> | Changes will not affect disabled users, although the changes need to be publicised |

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| | | Judgement on whether this question is necessary. Will be dependent on the type of policy/function being looked at. | |
| 1.8 | What factors or forces are at play that could contribute or detract from the outcomes identified earlier? | Identifying other problems that could potentially affect the main objectives to be achieved. Test out is there sufficient training, budget etc | It would be a problem if disabled people who can access the service currently could no longer do so following the changes- but there is no change intended to 1.2 above. |
| 1.9 | Taking the six strands of equalities is there anything in the policy that could discriminate or disadvantage any of these groups? | To look at each individual type of group to highlight if there are any issues with the policy or function that adversely affect any of the groups specifically | Access is relevant to disability, age and possibly to gender as people with prams tend to be predominantly women |
| 1.10 | From your perspective, how is the policy actually working in practice for each equalities group? | Actually testing the process for each of the stakeholder groups to see how it works in practice. Possibly have to assess wider than just the group looking at specific cases dependent on policy/function | Currently they are expected to have independent access to and egress from the bus (or have a personal assistant to help them), although assistance can be provided by the bus driver |
| | | <i>1.11 How does the local authority interface with other bodies in relation to the implementation of this policy function?</i> Relevance will depend on service being provided. Looking at if the other organisation procedures are adversely affecting what we are trying to do | The service is currently offered by MBC in conjunction with Arriva. Arriva's policy is implemented for P &R and drivers are trained to install the ramp and provide assistance. |

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| 2 | Consideration of available data, research and information | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 2.1 | What do you already know about who uses and delivers this service? | What do they know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service? Qualitative and quantitative information | See 1.9 Numbers of disabled people using the service have not been established. Much disability is hidden. |
| 2.2 | What additional information is needed to ensure that all equality groups' needs are taken into account? | Identifying where there are gaps in the information required to make an [initial?] [impact?] assessment. | Consultation with the Disability Focus Group to check user perspectives |
| 2.3 | How are you going to go about getting the extra information that is required | To initially be led by the group with mentor input where necessary. | See above. Publicity will be provided, following consultation identified in 2.2 for all P&R customers. |
| 3 | Formal consultation | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 3.1 | Who do we need to consult with? | Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should. | Disabled people through the DFG |
| 3.2 | What method/form of consultation can be used? | Residents Panel, known groups etc that can be used and how you are going to do it. Will be dependent on what means of consultation an authority already has. Focus Groups, surveys (face to face, postal, website) | See above |

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| | | Do barriers exist to effective consultation with any group? Resources to encourage full participation by marginalised groups | |
| | | Other questions are necessary but are likely to come up in general conversations around consultation – specific questions not required. | |
| 4 | Assessment of impact | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 4.1 | Have you identified any differential impact and does this adversely affect any groups in the community? | Look at what the effects are of the policy/function on other groups. From these findings identify if there are adverse affects on any groups. | This is to be established by discussion with the DFG although current service arrangements will remain the same. The access arrangements will be unchanged; publicity is required to reassure customers. The consultation with DFG will assist with the details in the publicity information. |
| 4.2 | If there is an adverse impact can it be avoided, can we make changes, can we lessen it etc? | Led by the mentees – what are the reasons for the negative impact? What could realistically be changed to negate the adverse impact? Can anything actually be done? | Mitigating factors may include suggestions from disabled people regarding what would help in order to maintain access, and clarification to disabled people regarding the access and egress policy. |

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| 4.3 | If there is nothing you can do, can the reasons be fairly justified? | Full justification from the mentees – must be their decision on the justification – ‘powerful’ questions to be used. | In order to access the bus, assistance getting on has to be matched with guaranteed assistance getting off (and for the return journey). This is likely to mean the disabled person either able to access on his/her own, or with a personal helper. |
| 5 | Consideration of measures that might mitigate any adverse impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity. | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 5.1 | Does any of the changes in relation to the adverse impact have a further adverse affect on any other group? | Join these questions with section 4 – if a resolution is identified explore it there and then as to whether or not it will adversely affect others. | The same issue applies to some elderly people and people with prams (tends to be a high % of women) although the access arrangements remain unchanged. |
| | | Further explore if necessary the changes following the questions in section 4. | |
| Internal processes for the organisation – to be further explored at the end of the mentoring process. | | | |
| 6 | Making a decision in the light of data, alternatives and consultations | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 6.1 | The organisations decision making process | Who is authorised to decide – role of senior management, Cabinet Structure of the decision making process | Cabinet Member |

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| | | How decisions are recorded | |
| 7 | Monitor for adverse impact in the future and publication of results of such monitoring | | |
| | Key questions | Aim of question / supplementary questions | Notes |
| 7.1 | What have we found out in completing this EqIA? What can we learn for the future? | Use a session to look at the monitoring, how to go about this, what was found out, how to ensure this is not repeated etc. Reflecting session to learn from what they have actually done. | The need to ensure that disabled passengers understand that access to and egress from the P&R service is ultimately dependent on their ability to do so on their own or with a personal helper; though the driver will do his/her best to help this cannot be guaranteed. |
| 7.2 | Who will carry out monitoring? | | MBC Parking Services |
| 7.3 | What needs to be monitored? | | Issues that disabled people may have with the service |
| 7.4 | What method(s) of monitoring? | Consider requirements if the service is not directly provided by the LA | Questionnaires/DFG |
| 7.5 | How will the monitoring information be published? | | Service plans / P&R website |
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| 8 | Publication of results of the impact assessment | | |
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