

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR**  
**ENVIRONMENT**

Decision Made: 20 March 2009

**PARK & RIDE ESTABLISHMENT**

**Issue for Decision**

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

**Decision Made**

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

**Reasons for decision**

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.

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 decision.

The next key cost area is around site security and maintenance and the Report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services proposes arrangements which will significantly reduce costs in this area.

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.

It has been 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.

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.

The mobile patrols of each of the Park & Ride sites will be carried out to ensure that:-

- The sites are opened to ensure that parking facilities are made available to our customers during operational hours and locked after the last bus.
- Each facility is maintained to a high standard.
- Our customers enjoy a safe and secure environment.
- Information is provided to our customers in relation to the service either directly by the attendants or via the notice boards.
- Surveys are conducted as required.
- Daily maintenance is carried out within each parking facility.

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

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.

Service levels can be maintained at each site as all bus enquiries will be handled by the bus service operator.

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.

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 (attached at Appendix A of the Report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services), has been carried out and consultation will be carried out with the Disability Focus Group.

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.

Park & Ride buses are fitted with kneeling suspension and meet the requirements of the Department for Transport, Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000.

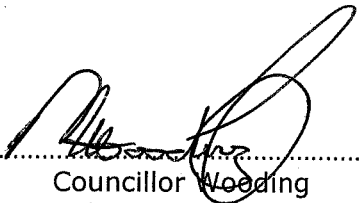
#### **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

To not revise the current Park & Ride establishment levels would result in the Council having to look elsewhere for savings.

## Background Papers

None

These documents are available at the Council offices.

Signed:  .....  
Councillor Wooding  
Cabinet Member for Environment

Date: 20/03/2009 .....

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in,  
please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members  
to the Scrutiny Manager by: **27 March 2009**