

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

DECISION NO:

22/00052

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: KCC Supported Bus Funding Review

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to withdraw funding support from 38 supported bus services.

Reason(s) for decision:

Local Transport Authorities have an obligation to provide such public transport services as they consider appropriate to meet public needs which would not otherwise be met. It is for Authorities to consider what services are “appropriate” to meet those needs. From April 2022, the net budget for supported bus services has reduced from £6m to £3.8m to support the Council achieve a balanced budget in 2022/23.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The issue has been discussed by Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee (ETCC) Members on:

- 18 February 2022
- 19 May 2022

A public consultation ran for eight weeks from 24 February to 20 April 2022 and was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign. 2,562 responses were received along with 55 letters and emails sent to the Public Transport team. In addition, the Council has also received three petitions, focussed surveys conducted by Kent Karrier operators and a Parish Council, four MPs letters and a focussed report by Compaid the operator of west Kent Karrier schemes regarding the impacts of the withdrawal of these services.

The proposed decision was discussed on 6 July 2022 by ETCC Members.

Issues raised during the discussion included:

- Cost increases to other services as a consequence of making the savings
- Impact on air quality and commitment to net zero targets
- Support for the retention of the Kent Karrier and commitment to work with Local Transport Groups
- Impact on rural communities’ access to services and social isolation
- Legality of process
- Whether race equality impacts had been fully considered

Members agreed to endorse the proposed decision, subject to the correction of information relating to the S4 bus service, by majority vote.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

To use funding from the Bus Service Improvement Funding however the funding conditions preclude

KCC from using the revenue funding element to support existing commercial / supported services; its focus is on future developments.

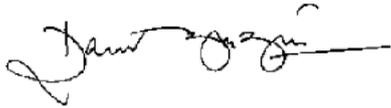
Frequency reductions and sharing resource however the opportunities for these types of savings have largely been previously deployed with limited scope for further adjustments and maintain a service; also, the cost of the driver/vehicle, cannot be reduced and the saving required was too great as a proportion of the overall budget to allow for this approach.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

Signed

Date: 19 July 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James O'Sullivan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.