

Transport Integration,
Commercial Services,
Gibson Drive,
Kings Hill,
West Malling,
Kent

ME19 4QG

Direct line: (01732) 227315
Ask for: Steve Craddock
My ref:
Your ref:
Email: steve.craddock@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Date:

Dear Sir / Madam,

PUBLIC BUS SERVICES IN KENT – PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL OF 409 BUS

I write in response to your consultation on changes to the supported bus services in Kent. Sevenoaks District Council note that the only supported service affected by these proposals in Sevenoaks District is the 409 commuter service between Hextable, Swanley and Crockenhill, which the County Council proposes to withdraw. It is understood that the 409 school services are not affected by this proposal.

It is noted that the 409 service does not score well against the criteria that KCC have set for continuing support. In particular, it is noted that the service duplicates the 477, which operates on approximately a one bus per 30 minutes schedule throughout the day. The 477 is primarily a commercially run service, operated by Arriva, with a number of KCC supported services operating in the early morning and late evening.

The loss of the 409 would reduce the frequency of bus services, in particular between Hextable and Swanley Station, in the morning and evening peaks. This may lead to more people driving to Swanley Station. SDC suggest that consideration is given to whether any additional 477 buses could be operated over this section during the morning and evening peaks, either operated commercially by Arriva or with some support by KCC. In addition, it is suggested that KCC and Arriva consider whether it is necessary, and whether opportunities exist, to amend the 477 timetable so that it is integrated with the timetable of the most frequently used trains at Swanley Station.

A key justification for the County Council proposing to withdraw the 409 service is that it duplicates the 477 service, operated, predominately on a commercial basis, by Arriva. This is also likely to be a key factor in the relatively low patronage and high cost of supporting the 409. However, it is vital that if the 409 is withdrawn then communities are not left without bus services by any changes to the 477. SDC understand that Arriva

Item No. 9 - Appendix A

have no plans to materially change the 477 service at present. It is suggested, however, that KCC seek formal confirmation of this and keep the issue under review. It is also important that KCC continue to subsidise any commercially-marginal early morning and evening routes of the 477 to provide communities in this area with accessibility to jobs, shops, service and other public transport links.

Yours sincerely

Steve Craddock
Senior Planning Officer