

Public Transport Briefing Note:

Bus Recovery and Kent Service Reductions

Stagecoach Network Review (Dover) - October 2022 Update



Commercial service changes background

Bus services operate in a de-regulated, privatised environment where operators match service levels and fares to demand and costs in order that services are sustainable. They are not obliged to provide any service or journey empowering them to react to changes to the commercial or operating environment.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on Public Transport use across the UK. Bus use in Kent, as with rest of the UK has only partially recovered and currently it is estimated that use of buses stands at around 70-80% of pre-pandemic levels, with the use in the off-peak being less than this. At the same time, bus operators are facing other financial and operational pressures notably in respect of increasing fuel and driver costs and a shortage of skilled drivers and engineering staff. For these reasons the Council is seeing a significant number of service withdrawals across Kent, many of which impact school services.

Stagecoach have continued to run a full bus network in Dover District so far, due to a combination of government emergency funding, protected subsidy from Kent County Council and continued partnership working between the Council and Stagecoach. However, this Autumn the Department for Transport asked bus operators to review their local bus network, to put them on a sustainable footing for the future, reflecting changes in people's travel habits coming out of the pandemic and considering the withdrawal of support funding. As such Stagecoach will be making significant changes to their local network in the Dover area from 30th October 2022.

KCC response

As part of Stagecoach's revised Dover network several school bus services were at threat and were advertised for withdrawal. As we have in other parts of the County, the Public Transport Department has worked with Stagecoach over the summer using limited Government (LTF) funding to explore measures to secure these school bus services. As a consequence, I write to advise that the following school journeys will

now continue until the end of the 2022/23 academic year, these journeys had originally been identified for withdrawal. I hope this provides some welcome news.

Stagecoach school journeys reinstated and will now continue past the 30th October 2022 until the end of the academic year.

Service No.	School Journey Details
80	0728 Deal-Worth-Sandwich
80	0709 Whitfield-Deal-Worth-Sandwich
80	0724 Walmer-Deal-Tower Hamlets
80A	0715 Deal-Sandown-Tower Hamlets
80A	0734 London Road – Mill Hill - St Margaret's – Tower Hamlets
80A	1535 Tower Hamlets-Sandown
80A	1535 Tower Hamlets-Deal Queen St
80A	1536 Sandwich-Worth-Deal-Dover
80A	1541 Dover Park Ave-Sandown
80B	1545 Tower Hamlets – Kingsdown
81A	0735 Deal-Betteshanger-Sandwich
81A	1533 Sandwich-Betteshanger-Deal
81B	1533 Sandwich-Eastry-Deal-Whitfield
88	0705 Dover-Shepherdswell-Sandwich
88	1550 Sandwich – Shepherdswell - Sandwich
88A	0723 Eastry-Shepherdswell-Dover
88A	1535 Tower Hamlets-Elvington-Eastry
88A	0820 Dover-Tower Hamlets-Christchurch
96	0737 Chillenden-Shepherdswell-Dover
96	1535 Dover – Shepherdswell - Chillenden
96A	0807 Aylesham-Christchurch
96A	1520 Christchurch - Aylesham