



Maidstone East Station and County Hall

Kent County Council Response to the South East Route: Kent Area Route Study Public Consultation

County Hall
Maidstone
June 2017



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Crossrail Extension Map

Extract from Crossrail to Ebbsfleet/Northfleet working group

Frontispiece

Maidstone East Station is due for redevelopment, enhancing access for all to a wide range of offices, shops and businesses including County Hall

Growth and Infrastructure Framework, Kent County Council and Medway Council, 2015

Extracts from document demonstrating projected growth in housing and employment in Kent and Medway to 2031

Kent County Council

Extracts from response to Department for Transport's public consultation on the new South Eastern rail franchise (May 2017)

Map of Kent Rail Network

John Luckcock

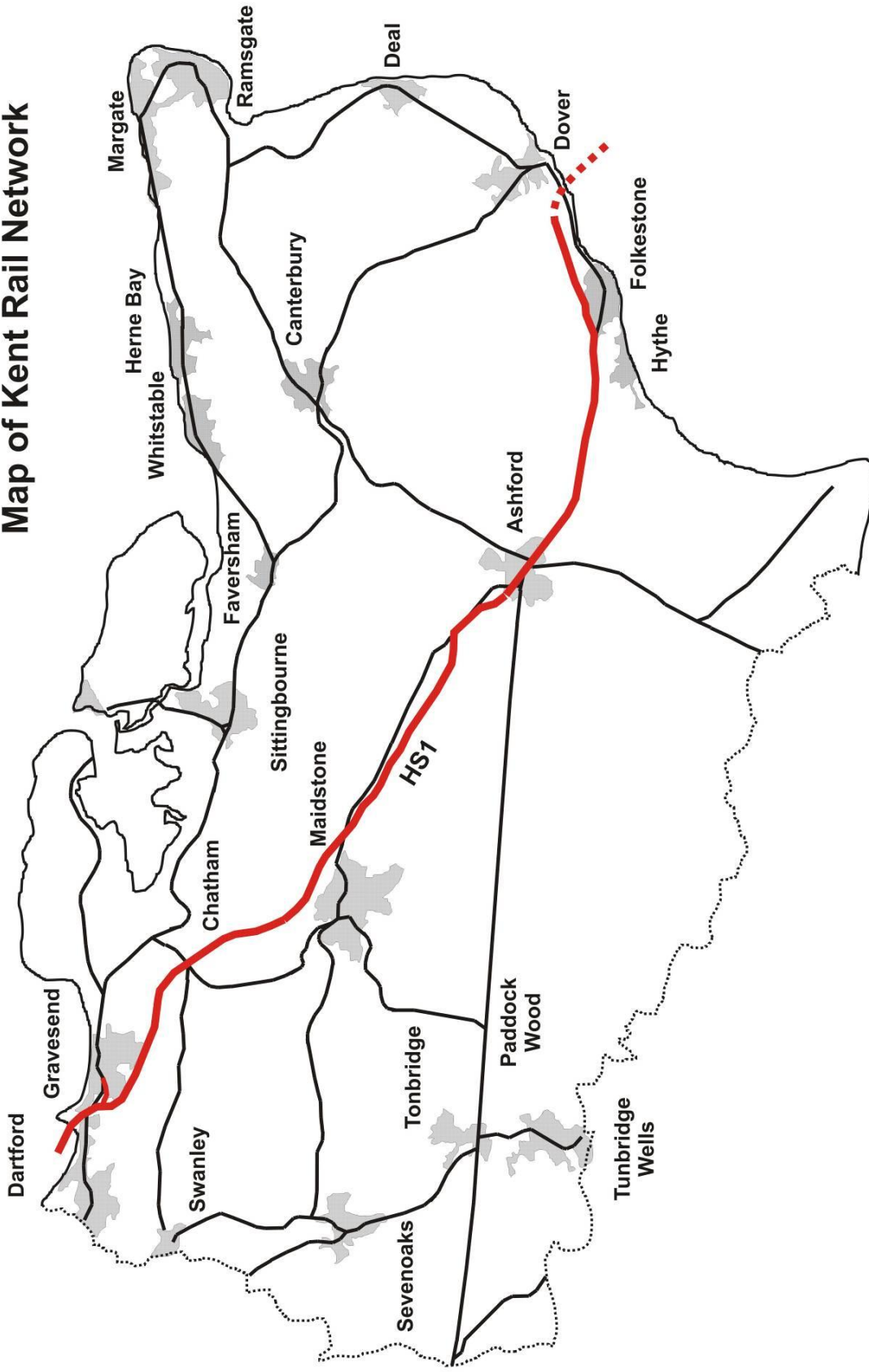
Thanet Parkway – Artist's Impression

Extract from Kent County Council's public consultation on new parkway station

Westenhanger Station

Location of part of site of proposed Otterpool Garden Town

Map of Kent Rail Network



FOREWORD

Kent County Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to Network Rail's draft 'South East Route: Kent Area Route Study' (KARS) as part of the Long Term Planning Process for future enhancements on Kent's rail network.

The simultaneous publication of this consultation and that of the Department for Transport (DfT) for the new South Eastern Rail Franchise (SERF) is particularly welcome, as for the first time in the history of the privatised railway there is now a genuinely joined-up approach between the processes for awarding a new franchise and agreeing funding options for the railway infrastructure on which that franchise will operate.

This draft KARS contains significant proposals as options for funders within the period of Network Rail's Control Period 6 (CP6: 2019-2024), and further options for consideration beyond that period to 2044. There is thus a clear alignment between the expected operation of the new SERF (2018 to 2025/2028) and the delivery of infrastructure investment on the Kent Route (2019 to 2024, and beyond).

Kent County Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to these two consultations in a coordinated, strategic way, as the outcomes following from both will help to realise the growth ambitions of Kent and Medway, as these decisions will determine the increased capacity and service levels which are essential to deliver the enhanced rail service which residents of, and visitors to, Kent deserve.

Paul Carter CBE
Leader
Kent County Council

June 2017

1 BACKGROUND AND APPROACH TO CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Kent County Council (KCC) has been involved for a considerable period in the consultative process adopted by Network Rail which has led to the publication of the draft KARS. The Council has been represented since 2014 at the Long Term Planning Process workshops, which have considered the longer-term needs of the rail network in the south-east region.

Since 2015, the Council has been represented on a regular basis at the meetings of the KARS Regional Working Group (RWG), which include representatives of all the Local Transport Authorities (LTA) and other public bodies which encompass the area of the Kent Route. The RWG will continue to meet, to consider the overall responses from stakeholders and the preferred options identified for investment, before publication of the final KARS in Autumn 2017.

The approach adopted in responding to this consultation is as follows:

- To identify the projected growth in housing and employment which will drive future growth in demand for rail services in Kent
- To summarise KCC's responses to the key points listed in the consultation's Executive Summary
- To provide a more detailed response to each of the investment options listed in 'Chapter 5 – Strategy and Choices for Funders'

KCC has also consulted, through the Council's annual rail summits and through engagement with rail travellers' associations and rail user groups, and with other local authorities in Kent, on the infrastructure enhancements required in Control Period 6 (CP6) and beyond. KCC also continues to collaborate with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in support of the objective of a High Speed service between London and East Sussex via Ashford, for which track re-alignment at Ashford would be a pre-requisite.

The consultation document requests that those responding indicate whether, as individuals or organisations, they would agree to have their response published on the Network Rail website. KCC agrees to, and welcomes, publication of the Council's response in this way.

2 HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS FOR KENT & MEDWAY

The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) sets out the planned growth in population, housing and employment across the county to 2031 and the infrastructure required to support that growth. This predicts a substantial increase in demand for rail passenger services between Kent and London for access to employment, education and leisure purposes.

Support for the proposals for enhancements to the rail network in Kent in this response reflect this planned increase in population and demand for rail transport, which will be one of the key drivers of enhanced infrastructure on the

Kent Route during CP6 and beyond. The tables below set out the projected growth in housing and employment in Kent and Medway to 2031.

Housing Growth 2011-2031

District	Total Growth 2011 – 2031
Ashford	15,453
Canterbury	16,000
Dartford	19,238
Dover	11,226
Gravesham	7,262
Maidstone	18,560
Sevenoaks	6,258
Shepway	7,331
Swale	14,299
Thanet	15,660
Tonbridge & Malling	13,916
Tunbridge Wells	7,296
Medway	20,000
Total Kent & Medway	172,499

Employment Growth 2011-2031

District	Total Growth 2011 – 2031	% Change 2011-2031
Ashford	12,800	22.6
Canterbury	12,400	16.9
Dartford	25,300	44.2
Dover	4,300	9.4
Gravesham	4,400	13.3
Maidstone	18,200	22.8
Sevenoaks	10,000	20.8
Shepway	800	1.8
Swale	9,300	17.0
Thanet	12,000	24.1
Tonbridge & Malling	11,900	19.1
Tunbridge Wells	10,500	18.4
Medway	24,200	23.4
Total Kent & Medway	156,100	20.3

[Source: Strategic Business Development & Intelligence, Kent County Council – Growth & Infrastructure Framework (revised data May 2017)]

3 RESPONSE TO EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic Categories

The investment options for funders identified in the consultation have been divided into three strategic categories:

(i) Meeting Demand to 2024

This is correctly identified as the primary category, as it encompasses the immediate needs of the Kent Route to deliver enhanced capacity wherever possible during the period of the new SERF, at least to the end of CP6 in 2024. The station enhancements identified in the consultation will be an essential priority for funding to deliver an immediate increase in capacity through lengthening of existing trains.

(ii) Meeting Demand to 2044

The recognition of the longer-term need for additional terminal capacity in London is rightly identified for this longer period. The consultation also correctly recognises the longer-term need for a coherent investment strategy to meet the expected continuing growth in passenger demand in Kent during the period 2024 to 2044.

(iii) Improving Connectivity across Kent

The consultation identifies a number of key locations where future investment would add additional connectivity, such as Hastings to London via Ashford, and also Faversham to Ashford direct, as well as resilience such as Dover to Ashford via Canterbury.

Capacity Interventions*

** London Bridge services mean those operating via London Bridge, either to/from Waterloo East and Charing Cross, or to/from Cannon Street*

(i) London Bridge Metro services

Operation of these into Charing Cross is restricted in platforms 4, 5 & 6, where Selective Door Opening (SDO) is required for trains operating as 12-cars. KCC supports replacement of older Metro fleet with new fleet for Metro services, which would remove this restriction at Charing Cross with the provision of a new fleet with SDO.

(ii) London Victoria Metro services

The consultation also identifies the capacity restrictions imposed by maximum 8-car operation of these services, some of which operate to/from Dartford via Bexleyheath, which would also be eased through the provision of additional capacity with a new Metro fleet.

(iii) London Bridge and London Victoria Mainline services

KCC supports the proposal for an additional 12-car siding on the metropolitan reversible line outside Cannon Street. This would help to mitigate the reduction in the overall number of peak paths at Cannon Street, and ensure that the current level of much needed capacity to/from the City for Kent Route commuters is maintained.

(iv) High Speed domestic services

The consultation correctly identifies the current and future projected growth rate of 5% pa in passenger journeys on all the High Speed services operating on the Kent Route. KCC has already recognised the need for a significant increase in the High Speed fleet [*KCC response to Q3 in DfT consultation on new SERF*], and supports the proposed enhancement in platform capacity at Maidstone West which would permit 12-car operation of High Speed trains on that route.

(v) Blackfriars services

The Thameslink services in Kent operating via Blackfriars from 2018 onwards will be formed by 8-car trains. KCC supports the consultation's options for extending platforms on the Thameslink routes in Kent wherever this is possible, although it may be necessary to operate with SDO at some stations, including Maidstone East where physical constraints preclude platform lengthening.

Freight

While the consultation recognises the important role that rail freight provides, there is a need to identify the risk of disruption to passenger services on the Kent route network which could arise from any further increase in freight train operation. As a minimum, all rail freight movements should be prohibited throughout the entire Kent Route network in the peak periods, as there are too many occasions when rail freight failures or derailments cause disproportionate delays to passenger services. This is an issue of wider national importance which needs to be highlighted in the national rail freight strategy.

(See paragraph 5.14 below for a more detailed response to the proposal for rail freight gauge clearance on the Kent Route).

Power Supply

The consultation identifies the need for upgrades to the power supply on specific sections of route in Kent, but this urgent need should have its own section in the Executive Summary. In particular, the Tonbridge-Hastings, Ashford-Ramsgate, and Dover-Ramsgate routes will all require additional power supply to facilitate increased service levels, especially with the projected operation of a greater number of 12-car High Speed trains.

Stabling and Maintenance of Rolling-Stock

This requirement also needs to have greater prominence in the KARS, with its own entry in the Executive Summary to highlight its urgency and critical importance. The provision of additional stabling and maintenance facilities is crucial in supporting any further expansion of the fleet on the Kent Route services, as without this additional provision, it will not be possible to properly service and maintain such additional rolling-stock.

Improving Connectivity

KCC supports the options for funders identified in the consultation for improving connectivity, both between other counties and Kent and within Kent. The option of extending High Speed services via the Marshlink line to/from East Sussex is dealt with in detail in section 4 of this response.

Other options identified include a new link between South London and Ebbsfleet utilising the former Gravesend West branch line (formerly used by Eurostar services to/from Waterloo). This would be an intelligent use of existing resources and railway alignment, and could potentially deliver much needed additional capacity to serve the emerging Ebbsfleet Garden City and the proposed London Resort Theme Park.

KCC also welcomes the longer-term ambitions for additional connectivity such as Faversham to Ashford, and additional resilience such as Dover to Ashford, both of which are also dealt with in more detail in section 4.

4 RESPONSE TO STRATEGY AND CHOICES FOR FUNDERS

Key Principles

Chapter 5 of the KARS sets out the strategy and choices for funders for Control Period 6 (2019-2024), and beyond that period to 2044. KCC's responses to these options are set out below; the numbers refer to the paragraphs in the KARS.

5.1 Prioritisation

Recognise key criteria which have determined choices for funders:

- increased demand to 2024
- synergies with planned renewals
- aligning capacity works with major programmes
- affordability
- value for money

5.2 Electrification

Agree with longer term aspiration to electrify Ashford to Ore, but accept this is now a longer-term strategic goal which is unlikely to be funded in CP6.

5.3 Digital Railway

KCC's experience to date with the Digital Railway arm of Network Rail suggests that the ambitions for the roll-out of European Train Control System (ETCS) across the national network are unrealistic. KCC agrees with the KARS that "the fundamental constraints of terminal capacity and junctions will still need to be mitigated". It is therefore extremely unlikely that Digital Railway technology will make a significant difference to the capacity of the Kent Route between now and 2044.

5.4 Kent Strategy

- working group and RWG developed strategy to meet conditional outputs to 2024
- demand expected to increase beyond this to 2044

Conditional Outputs

The KARS lists specific Conditional Outputs (CO) as options for funders. Delivery of these will be dependent on funding, either from the settlement for CP6 capacity enhancements, or from third party sources, or from a combination of both. There is, however, a clear expectation within Network Rail that such projects are increasingly funded either through a match-funding arrangement or entirely by third party agreements.

5.5 CO1: London Bridge (LB) Metro

Agree with option to extend all LB Metro to 12-car operation wherever this is practicable. This would deliver additional capacity to Dartford, Gravesend and Sevenoaks.

5.6 CO2: Victoria (VIC) Metro

Agree with options to extend all VIC Metro to 8-car operation wherever this is practicable. This would deliver additional capacity to Dartford (via Bexleyheath) and to Sheerness (via Gillingham).

5.7 CO3: High Speed (HS) Domestic

Lengthening existing 6-car to 12-car will not meet the capacity gap alone. KCC has submitted the following plan for an increase in the HS fleet as part of the response to the DfT for the new SERF:

- 12 new 6-car sets for uplift to Ashford / Canterbury / Dover / Maidstone West service
- 3 new 6-car sets for new Ashford / Rye / Hastings service
- 5 new 6-car sets for uplift to Ebbsfleet service*

** this requirement reflects the need for a dedicated service to provide the additional capacity required for the planned housing development at Ebbsfleet Garden City and the proposed leisure park on the Swanscombe peninsula. Both of these developments could also be served by the proposed extension of Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) to Ebbsfleet.*

Total: 20 new 6-car sets (includes operational spares)

This is substantially greater than the 6 sets proposed in the draft KARS, as the KCC response envisages a strategic increase in both peak (all 6-car to 12-car) and off-peak (doubling existing headways) HS services. The total also responds to planned growth in demand at Ebbsfleet as indicated above.

Agree with proposed extension of platform at Maidstone West to serve 12-car HS trains terminating there. Also note continuing restriction due to Shakespeare Tunnels, which restrict public use of HS trains to front 6-cars only.

5.8 CO4: Blackfriars (BL) Thameslink

Route map at figure 5.4 is incorrect and needs to change to show Maidstone East – Blackfriars services via Swanley and Chislehurst Junction then direct to London Bridge, then Thameslink core stations

This route would probably remain as an 8-car railway, as there would be major problems with platform extensions to accommodate 12-cars at Maidstone East

New 8-car Class 700 sets should meet demand on this route as this will be new peak and off-peak service to/from BL and Thameslink core stations

Route map at figure 4 also needs to omit Herne Hill route, as both Orpington and Sevenoaks (via Bat & Ball) Thameslink services will operate via Catford Loop to/from BL

5.9 CO5: London Bridge (LB) and Victoria (VIC) Mainline

Agree with cascade of Class 377 sets from GTR to replace most of Class 465/466 sets, to be prioritised on Maidstone East and Chatham routes

5.10 **A Strategy to 2044 - Capacity**

KCC recognises challenge of providing increased capacity to 2044, once all peak LB and VIC services are extended to 12-car operation - responses to specific options for enhancement are set out below

5.11 **Longer Term Options**

Cannon Street (CS)

Agree proposal to deliver additional peak capacity at CS by converting Metropolitan Reversing Line into 12-car siding, to be prioritised for use by LB services routed via Tonbridge

Charing Cross (CX)

Platforms 4, 5 & 6 restricted to 11-car door opening, so only Class 375 and 377 trains can operate into these platforms with SDO, so precludes Metro services longer than 10-cars in these platforms

Agree with longer-term ambition of re-build over Hungerford Bridge (as with Blackfriars re-build) with new covered connection direct to South Bank and Waterloo Main concourse – this would enable Waterloo East to close, and use of that land to provide additional turn-back sidings to increase overall terminal capacity – this major proposal should be examined in depth with a view to fund and deliver in extended period to 2044

Victoria (VIC)

Agree need to re-model south-eastern side of VIC, to remove restricted terminal capacity with platforms 1 to 3 serving only 8-car length trains – these need to be extended to provide flexible terminal capacity with platforms 4 to 8 which serve 12-car length trains

Agree proposal to utilise vacant track-bed on Grosvenor Bridge, to re-instate 4-track approach to VIC on south-eastern side. Also note that current congestion between Southeastern and Thameslink services at flat junction at Herne Hill will be considerably relieved when full Thameslink service starts in December 2018, with main service operating via LB instead of Herne Hill, and Bat & Ball and Orpington services operating via Catford Loop instead of Herne Hill

Agree that option for 4-tracking on section through Kent House should be examined for delivery after CP6 for period to 2044

Resignalling

Agree with longer-term resignalling of following routes to increase resilience, capacity and reliability:

- Ashford - Ramsgate via Canterbury West
- Ashford - Hastings (bo-peep junction)
- Tonbridge - Hastings (bo-peep junction)

Each of these Mainline routes is in need of these outcomes, and KCC supports the development of plans to deliver these upgrades if funders choose to support them.

Given the specific passenger outcomes which would accrue from these upgrades, and that two of the three routes are cross-border between two counties, these are exactly the sort of projects for which a business case could be developed for third party match-funding through the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). This would, however, be dependent either on a further allocation of Local Growth Fund (LGF) (round 4), or on a bid to the new National Productivity Investment Fund.

- Orpington – Sevenoaks

KCC supports proposal by Sevenoaks Rail Traveller Association (SRTA) for study into signalling upgrade between Sevenoaks and Orpington to deliver headway of 24 paths per hour each way on this section (15 fast paths, 6 slow paths, and 3 paths for recovery) – this is a new proposal which would require third party funding, but could deliver significant increase in capacity on LB Mainline routes.

5.12 Third Party Proposals

South East London Metroisation

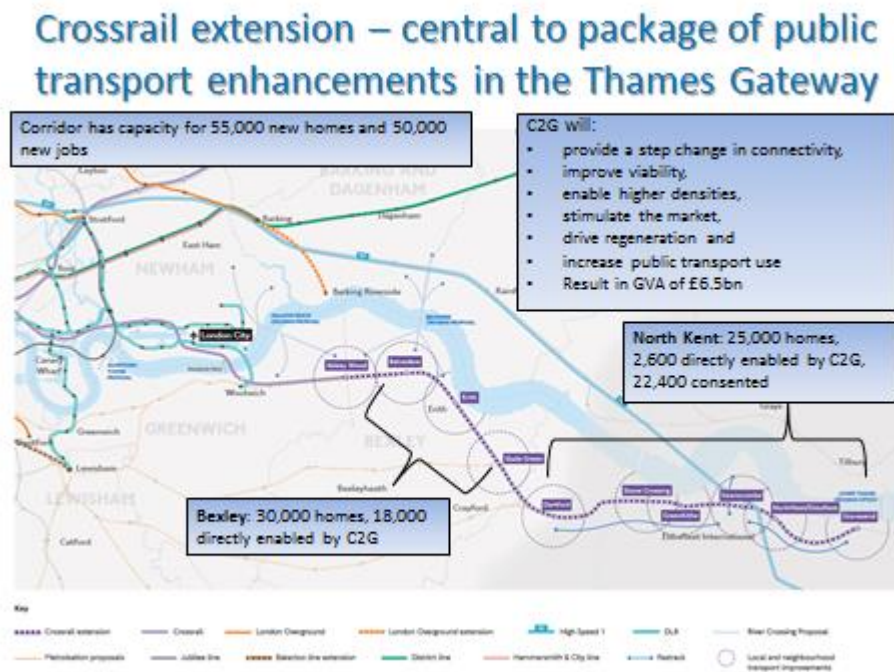
The term 'Metroisation' has been interpreted in several different ways, ranging from standardisation of headways and journey destinations on the existing franchise network to full transfer of the Metro service to Transport for London (TfL) and the London Mayor. The key drivers of Metroisation when understood in the former sense would be a new Metro fleet with additional passenger capacity, and the subsequent removal of existing constraints at London termini through extended operation of SDO at those platforms with restricted lengths.

Following the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport not to agree to any further transfer of Metro services in the Greater London Authority area to TfL, the scope of the new SERF will remain unchanged. KCC has responded to proposals for the Metro services in the DfT's consultation for the new SERF, recognising the potential value of some realignment of London termini for some of the Metro

services. The principal outcome of such a change would be relief from some of the worst congestion at several junctions in the Lewisham and St John's area of the route network, which should lead to an increase in reliability for all services on this section of route.

Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension towards Ebbsfleet / Northfleet

KCC is represented on the Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) towards Ebbsfleet / Northfleet Working Group, and is committed jointly with partners to the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) which is planned for presentation to Government in 2018. The next stage would be a bid for funding to develop a full business case, with a view to the design, planning and delivery of the extension by the late 2020s.



[Source: Crossrail to Ebbsfleet / Northfleet working group]

5.13 **Connectivity**

1st Priority: Marshlink

KCC regards the infrastructure enhancements to the track and signalling at Ashford International which will be required to facilitate connectivity between High Speed 1 and the Marshlink line as the 1st priority for delivery on the Kent Route in CP6.

KCC expressed strong support for an increase in the provision of High Speed capacity in East Kent and to/from Hastings in the Council's response to the DfT consultation for the new SERF:

“KCC strongly supports the proposed extension of High Speed services to Hastings and Bexhill via Ashford and Rye. The principal reasons for this strong support are:

- To generate growth in East Kent and East Sussex (as part of a wider increase in High Speed service levels across the new SERF network)
- To deliver additional High Speed capacity to Ashford, as well as to Rye, Hastings and Bexhill in East Sussex
- To relieve capacity constraints on the Tonbridge – Hastings route
- To be supported by KCC’s submission for an additional fleet of High Speed bi-mode rolling-stock

There is a specific option for funders included in the proposed list of enhancements in the draft Kent Route Study recently published by Network Rail for Control Period 6 (CP6: 2019-2024) which could enable this new service to operate.

This is for a realignment of the track layout at Ashford International station, to join the track serving the London end of platform 2 (which is accessible from the Marshlink route) to the Ashford Spurs which link through to High Speed 1.

The delivery of this project, provided funding was allocated in the settlement for the Kent Route for CP6, would facilitate the through operation of High Speed bi-mode services between London St Pancras and Hastings / Bexhill via Ashford and Rye.”

[Source: KCC response to DfT public consultation on new South Eastern Rail Franchise, May 2017]

The reasoned approach proposed in the KARS is one that KCC would support, i.e. a phased delivery of line enhancements first, including the extension of the passing-loop at Rye; a detailed timetable study to be included in the final KARS; options to be costed for different termini in East Sussex for the HS service; recognition of capacity gains on the Hastings-Tonbridge route once HS services were extended to/from Hastings; and options to be modelled for different train types and power mode types.



Ashford International – Options to link High Speed 1 with Marshlink

2nd Priority: Ebbsfleet Southern Link

KCC supports the development of this new project as a priority for CP6 (2019-2024) rather than for the longer term towards 2044. It would provide an essential link between South London and the developing Ebbsfleet Garden City and the proposed leisure park on Swanscombe peninsula.

This new proposed link, for which option 1 (new terminating platform adjacent to existing operational lines) appears to be a reasonable and deliverable output, has the potential to provide much needed additional capacity with a new suburban rail service operating from either Victoria or Bromley South via Swanley to Ebbsfleet. It will however be important, in designing the proposed connection, to avoid any impact on the Scheduled Monument and nationally important undesignated archaeological remains located at Springhead Roman town, and on the religious focus which is located either side of the A2.

This project may be an appropriate candidate for a bid for third party funding through the SELEP, either from a further allocation of Local Growth Fund (round 4), or from a bid to the new National Productivity

Investment Fund. Such funding would support the development of a wide area of retail, commercial, residential and leisure activity, all of which will demand a high level of public transport access by rail.

3rd Priority: North Kent to South Kent

KCC supports this as a longer-term project to improve north-south connectivity by rail between Faversham and Ashford. The provision of a new spur line between the Faversham-Canterbury East line and the Ashford-Canterbury West line would deliver this option, but there would be topographical challenges due to the difference in levels between these two lines.

This project should be costed for delivery in the longer term, but it would require at least partial third party funding. The benefits could be substantial, supporting growth through the delivery of a through north-south rail service in a part of Kent where the road links are poor, as well as opening up options for further connectivity (e.g. Sheerness to Ashford via Sittingbourne and Faversham).

4th Priority: Canterbury Chord – Resilience

KCC also supports this proposal as another longer-term project, which would provide resilience for the Dover-Folkestone section of rail route in the event of any further collapse of the track-bed from geological or maritime causes. The provision of a new chord linking the Dover Priory-Canterbury East line with the Canterbury West-Ashford line would ensure that an alternative route was available, even if only for a limited period, to enable trains to operate between Ashford and Dover.

5.14 **Freight**

Gauge Clearance

The proposals in the KARS for gauge clearance assessments and potential delivery are balanced and reasonable. The provision of gauge clearance for WR12 gauge containers on freight routes currently limited to WR8 gauge clearance through the provision of pocket wagons which hold the higher containers between the bogies would represent a worthwhile investment, provided that there were no insurmountable obstacles to its delivery.

The subsequent provision of a range of freight routes through Kent for WR12 clearance containers would enhance the quantum of rail freight through the county, which KCC would strongly support provided that it did not have a negative impact on passenger services.

Of the routes identified in the KARS, KCC would particularly support greater use of the combined route of HS1 and the former Gravesend West branch alignment to Fawkham Junction, as the latter is virtually

unused at present. This would also prevent an excessive volume of freight being diverted from the Tonbridge/Redhill route to the Maidstone East route.

5.15 **Stations**

Upgrades

As the four stations listed are all in Greater London, KCC proposes that the following most urgent upgrades / rebuilds for stations in Kent and Medway should be added to those identified in the KARS:

- Swanley - proposed re-build on existing site
- Strood - proposed re-build on existing site
- Maidstone East - completion of this late-running re-build project planned for completion before end of CP5 (2019)

3rd Party New Stations

Thanet Parkway

KCC is the lead partner for the delivery of a new Thanet Parkway station. The Council is currently awaiting a funding decision in response to its application to the New Stations Fund round 2 (NSF2). If successful, this final tranche of funding will complete the funding required for the project, which is currently planned for delivery by Summer 2020.

The new Parkway station will be served by all High Speed and Mainline services which currently pass the site, and the jointly funded Journey Time Improvement (JTI) scheme between KCC and Network Rail will deliver a further 3 minute reduction in journey time on the Ashford-Ramsgate route which will mitigate the additional dwell time added by the new stop at Parkway for passengers to/from Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate.

KCC has highlighted the need for the new Parkway station to be included in the service specification for the new SERF. The Council's response to the DfT also recognises the timetable analysis work already undertaken:

“Timetable analysis undertaken by Network Rail has demonstrated that there would be no additional costs involved in terms of rolling-stock or crews, but that the round-the-loop High Speed service would need to have an adjustment to its stopping pattern to accommodate the additional station stop. With the proposal above to extend the Mainline service from Dover to Ramsgate via Sandwich all day, this will facilitate the removal of Martin Mill from the High Speed service and its replacement with Thanet Parkway.”

[Source: KCC response to DfT public consultation on new South Eastern Rail Franchise, May 2017]



Westenhanger

The current station at Westenhanger has a recently installed down platform of 8-car length and the original up platform of 5-car length. The platforms are staggered, with a road bridge dividing them. The station site is cramped, with no formal parking control and no station facilities.

The proposal by Shepway District Council (SDC) to deliver Otterpool Park Garden Town comprising up to 12,000 houses, on a site immediately to the south of the railway line, offers an ideal opportunity to develop the current station. This would require 100% developer funding through either a CIL or section 106 agreement, and would involve the construction of a new up platform of 12-car length opposite the current down platform, the extension of the down platform from 8-car to 12-car length, and a new station ticket office with other facilities and a new station car park on the south side of the new station site.

KCC supports the aspirations of SDC for the development of Westenhanger station, but the Council has explained in the response to the DfT's new SERF consultation that additional stops on the HS service would either involve an increase in overall journey times to/from Folkestone and Dover, or an alternate stopping pattern whereby HS

trains omitted either Westenhanger or Folkestone West in order to retain the existing journey times.

It is important that the need for the expansion of Westenhanger station is recognised in the KARS for delivery during CP6, as the first stage of the Otterpool Garden Town development is delivered.



Part of site of proposed Otterpool Garden Town adjacent to Westenhanger station

Conclusion

In responding to Network Rail's Kent Area Route Study for Control Period 6 (2019-2024) and beyond to 2044, KCC has highlighted the critical priorities which the Council regards as essential for delivery to enhance the capacity of Kent's rail network:

1st Priority: Marshlink

KCC regards the infrastructure enhancements to the track and signalling at Ashford International which will be required to facilitate connectivity between High Speed 1 and the Marshlink line as the highest priority for delivery, as this intervention would enable completion of the proposed increase in the High Speed service network proposed in KCC's response to the DfT's consultation;

2nd Priority: Ebbsfleet Southern Link

KCC supports the development of this new project as a priority for CP6 (2019-2024) rather than for the longer term towards 2044, as it would provide an essential link between South London and the developing Ebbsfleet Garden City and the proposed London Resort Theme Park on the Swanscombe peninsula;

3rd Priority: North Kent to South Kent

KCC supports this new link as a longer-term project to improve north-south connectivity by rail between Faversham and Ashford;

4th Priority: Canterbury Chord – Resilience

KCC also supports this proposal as another longer-term project, which would provide resilience for the Dover-Folkestone section of rail route in the event of any further collapse of the track-bed from geological or maritime causes.

This response has also set out other priorities for consideration, either from Network Rail's capacity enhancements allocation for CP6 or from third party match-funding. These include the proposals for an upgrade to the signalling between Orpington and Sevenoaks to increase capacity on that section of the Mainline route; the re-build of key stations in Kent and Medway; and an upgrade to the power supply wherever this is required to facilitate operation of 12-car trains.

KCC looks forward to continuing the close working relationship developed in recent years with Network Rail, to ensure that, together with other stakeholders, KCC can support the delivery, with bids for third party match-funding when required, of the essential infrastructure enhancements prioritised in this response.

**County Hall
Maidstone
June 2017**

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