

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure to the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board on 22 February 2011

1 BOROUGH TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

Summary

The report provides an update on a range of current transportation issues that the Board has been focusing on over recent meetings.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 A number of factors have combined in recent times to create a significant focus on transportation within the Borough. For example, the County Council will publish in the next few weeks its third Local Transport Plan for Kent (LTP3) covering the period 2011 to 2016. This complements another transportation planning document recently issued by the County Council entitled 'Growth without Gridlock'.
- 1.1.2 Unfortunately, the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling scheme has slipped in the programme yet again and is now in the pool of schemes for the years beyond 2015.
- 1.1.3 At the same time, analysis of reports on future budgets at recent meetings of the County Council's Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (EHWPOSC) points to a harsher funding situation for highway improvement schemes over the next few years and this will inevitably have an adverse impact on the County Council's improvement programme.
- 1.1.4 In parallel with these road related matters, rail transportation issues have also continued to attract Borough Council attention, not the least because we can expect the Department for Transport (DfT) to begin fairly soon consulting on the next franchise for Kent.

1.2 Highways Update

- 1.2.1 **LTP3** - At its last meeting in November, the Board considered its response to the Kent Highway Services (KHS) consultation on LTP3. This was shared with Sir John Stanley MP and Tracey Crouch MP. Sir John subsequently wrote to the County Council reinforcing the points made by the Borough Council and he urged a rebalancing of the focus of future investment towards the areas where growth is actually happening during the period of LTP3 such as within this Borough rather than an over-concentration in growth areas where development is planned for many years hence.
- 1.2.2 He asked me to make Members of the Borough Council aware of his letter and it is reproduced at **Annex 1**. The Board will see that it is a powerful endorsement of the position advocated by the Borough Council in its response to the consultation.

- 1.2.3 The report on LTP3 to the EHWPOSC meeting of 18 January suggests that the robust justification for a reconsideration of the prioritisation methodology has not been acceptable - see **Annex 2**. The County Council is persisting with the budget allocation and spatial distribution approach it outlined in the consultation document and this will be used to formulate the Implementation Plan.
- 1.2.4 This is disappointing, though it will not have such a significant impact in the early years of LTP3 for no other reason than the fact that the total funding for integrated transport measures across the whole of Kent for distribution, using whatever priority system is eventually adopted, is almost insignificant compared to the demand for schemes.
- 1.2.5 The total budget for 2011/12 is of the order of £8.2M of which £2.4 will be diverted towards capital maintenance. The Member Highway Fund (MFH) will require £2.2M and Crash Remedial Measures £2.3M. So this only leaves some £1.3M for all the integrated transport schemes in Kent next year. The budget profiles suggest this position is unlikely to alter before 2014/15 when the indicative allocation, that it should be noted is not firmly guaranteed at this stage, increases appreciably to £12.3M.
- 1.2.6 **A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling scheme** – This scheme has slipped back in the programme to the period beyond 2015 as a consequence of the major review of the national roads programme that accompanied the Comprehensive Spending Review. It is, therefore, competing with a range of other schemes to secure a place in the programme for the planning period beyond 2015 when the funding climate becomes clearer and that programme is reassessed.
- 1.2.7 What this does emphasise is the need to ensure that any barriers to achieving the scheme are removed. The most critical of these, after funding, are legal and technical processes associated with the highway orders, compulsory purchase orders and listed building consents. This is all the more so if the County Council succeeds in its ambition to promote this scheme as set out in its strategy document ‘Growth without Gridlock’.
- 1.2.8 These critical procedural matters are currently in abeyance as a result of the postponed Public Inquiry last summer. The A21 Reference Group, consisting of local Members of Parliament and Members from Councils along the route of the A21, collectively agreed that there should be representations to the DfT urging that the Inquiry be resumed as soon as practicably possible so that this impediment to future progress is removed. **Annex 3** reproduces the letter from the Borough Council to the DfT and the Leader, in his capacity as Chairman of the Local Strategic Partnership, has also sent one in the same terms.
- 1.2.9 **Transportation Strategy** – It is ironic that this period of financial constraint should coincide with a time when new transportation policy formulation is carrying on with some intensity. The government has recently published a transportation white

paper entitled 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon'. This is set at a broad strategic national level and it is difficult to discern what impact it will have at a local level.

- 1.2.10 However, it does herald the introduction of a new funding stream, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) that could be a potential source of finance for some Borough transportation priorities over the next few years when LTP funding is going to be limited. The difficulties in securing access to funding will be profound because it requires submission of a bid with quite a mass of supporting evidence, business case, detailed design and proof of wide local non-public sector involvement and participation. Clearly, it will need to demonstrate close alignment with sustainable transport objectives. Importantly, it will not be directly open to the district tier to make bids. These will have to come from local highway authorities or local transport authorities.
- 1.2.11 So there will be competition for the finite funding available and a substantial investment within a tight bid timescale required to gain access to this funding source. As just mentioned, the bidders are deemed to be local traffic authorities and, for Kent, this means any submission will come from the County Council. It appears that only one bid can be made by each authority over the four year life of the fund. The County Council will be submitting a bid for funding but I do not have details what this will be and whether it will be across a 'themed' approach such as, for example, 'sustainable interchange', so that it could be an aggregate of many smaller constituent scheme proposals.
- 1.2.12 One particular initiative that we have been advocating for some time, remodelling the forecourt at West Malling station, would appear to align closely with the many desirable outcomes sought within the LSTF. It is focused on improved interchange for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists scheme at a station where planned developments in the area will contribute to an increase in passengers. There is confirmed development funding to contribute to the cost of improvement and the potential for private sector involvement to support the right bid.
- 1.2.13 The design concept is still at a basic level so there is no opportunity to include this in the early phases of bidding for the LSTF. However, depending on the nature of the County Council submission and its timing, this could be a good candidate for inclusion and County Council officers have been made aware of its potential. I will report further on this to future meetings of the Board.
- 1.2.14 In parallel with the publication of the government's sustainable transport strategy, the County Council has also just released the final version of its transport vision for the next 20/25 years entitled 'Growth without Gridlock'.
- 1.2.15 In broad overview, the document is pleasing in that it recognises a number of key transport issues for which this Borough has been advocating solutions for many years. The A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling scheme is highlighted and there is an indication that the County Council wishes to progress this scheme direct

itself, subject to funding issues being acceptable. This is part of a wider ambition for Highways Agency work to be carried out by local highway authorities. There is also mention of a range of other matters such as the Colts Hill Bypass on the A228, Borough Green Bypass, rail improvements such as peak city services on the Maidstone East/West Malling Line, direct access from Kent to Gatwick, Medway Valley Line HS1 services, Thameslink services from Maidstone East. There is also recognition of the key linkage between local spatial planning and transport planning, thought would that this had been properly taken on board by those dealing with LTP3.

- 1.2.16 Overall, Growth without Gridlock has, inevitably, to be a product of its time and it has had to reflect overtly the grim financial climate that unavoidably impacts on the scope for scheme implementation. This focus on conditions now is therefore likely to make it a 'dated' read fairly quickly in its 25 year lifespan and I expect it will need to be revised before too long.
- 1.2.17 I have placed copies of the government's white paper on transport and the County Council's Growth without Gridlock in the Members' Library for reference.
- 1.2.18 **Transport Programme** – Despite the disappointing outlook for scheme funding from the LTP over the next few years, the Borough Council continues to have ambitions for highway improvement. This is prompted in no small part by the significant activity engendered by development within the Borough, particularly the Medway gap where there is an intense and complex series of development obligations that we are coordinating with the County Council. The scale and complexity of this is set out in **Annex 4**.
- 1.2.19 While not of the same scale, there are potential development related works at other locations in the Borough, together with priorities unrelated to development, that we would wish the County Council to take on board and promote to the extent that funding will permit. I have set these out in **Annex 5** and I recommend that the Board endorses this as a potential schemes list that we can advocate and encourage the highway authority to implement when circumstances are right.
- 1.2.20 **Planning Policy Guidance 13 : Transport** (PPG13) - At the start of January, the Local Government Secretary and the Transport Secretary announced changes to PPG13 that purported to change parking standards for new developments and to alter the regime on charging for parking. The press release announcing the change is reproduced at **Annex 6**. The impression given is that announcement signified considerable modification of current practice whereas, at least here in Kent, that is not so.
- 1.2.21 The changes in PPG13 relate solely to parking. PPG13 merits a fundamental review to bring it into alignment with much other recent planning policy and no doubt this will occur with the review of National Planning Policy. For the time being changes to the wording on parking standards, essentially removes the word

'maximum' wherever it appears. That in itself is a helpful move to enable a more localised, pragmatic view to be taken on parking provision.

1.2.22 Changes to PPS3 Housing published in June 2010 also emphasises "a *design-led approach to the provision of car-parking space, that is well integrated with a high quality public realm and streets that are pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly*". It is helpful to have this now echoed in PPG13, notwithstanding its need for a more general revision. It should be noted that the PPG13 changes are focussed on residential parking standards and not parking standards in general - the annex on parking standards for non-residential uses remains unchanged in the PPG.

1.2.23 As far as parking charges is concerned, the original version of the PPG said

Car parking charges should also be used to encourage the use of alternative modes. The RTS should set out the context for parking controls and charges by each local authority. Within this context, Local Authorities should set out appropriate levels and charges for parking which do not undermine the vitality of other town centres. Controls over public parking (both on-street parking and in car parks) need to be backed up by adequate enforcement measures.

The new version reads:

Local authorities should set out appropriate levels and charges for parking which do not undermine the vitality of other town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate.

1.2.24 These changes are very much in line with what this Council has been practising consistently over many years to achieve a best balance between local parking management objectives, support for the local economy and obtaining a proper return for the use of the Council's assets.

1.3 Rail Update

1.3.1 Scrutiny of rail services in Kent has, if anything, intensified since I last reported on these matters to the Board in February last year. The issues remain the same but the impact has become more acute; the focus on service deterioration resulting from the removal of city services on the Maidstone East/West Malling line when Southeastern Railway introduced the new timetable in December 2009, the annual fare increase built around RPI+3%, restoration of direct services to Gatwick from Tonbridge and ultimately the rest of Kent. However, these have been augmented by a number of other considerations more recently such as the extension of the current franchise from 2012 to 2014, SER performance over the winter crisis period, and service performance generally.

1.3.2 Sir John Stanley secured a Westminster Hall debate on train services in West Kent on 19 January and the transcript of the session at **Annex 7** serves an excellent précis of all the current rail issues confronting us.

- 1.3.3 Just before Christmas I learned about a request from Transport for London to divert Maidstone East service around the 'Catford Loop' to make additional stops at Peckham Rye or Denmark Hill. This appeared to be yet another potential threat to securing proper services from Maidstone and the Malling area into London, even though the final destination is Victoria station. It may only add a few minutes to the service but these are valuable minutes on trains that are already filled to standing room only by the time they get there.
- 1.3.4 I received a reply from the DfT that is far from satisfactory and I have followed this up with further representations. At the same time the Hansard abstract shows that Sir John took the opportunity to air this matter at the Westminster Hall debate. I hope that seeing it raised at such a high level is sufficient warning to the DfT that West Kent is now watching with great scrutiny to ensure that any potential threats to the quality of services on the line are identified early and that vigorous representations are made to ensure they are abandoned. To ensure a formal stance on any attempts to introduce unnecessary and diversions in London that would impact adversely on services, I am recommending that the Board endorses such a position.
- 1.3.5 During most of last year and the year before, the Borough Council advocated restoration of services to the City and, ideally, Cannon Street. The chances of this happening within the current franchise arrangements were almost negligible and it would have needed an instructed change in the specification by the DfT to achieve this, an unlikely result given the apparent cost of £637k for service reinstatement. In the Westminster Hall debate, it can be seen that there is work going on behind the scenes to examine options for some restoration of city service with a favoured one being peak time Thameslink services through Blackfriars station from 2012 onwards.
- 1.3.6 I have already responded to Sir John to signal that I believed this Council would be keen to support what I understand might be two additional trains during the peak period to Blackfriars, subject to them being truly peak services and not the pale reflection that we used to have with services travelling at what is termed the 'shoulder peak'. Coordinated services during the main morning and evening peaks to provide work and home journeys at a reasonable reflection of the normal working day would be a bonus and I recommend that this option be supported if that is what the Minister announces as an option at the end of February.
- 1.3.7 The rail franchise extension is also attracting a great deal of interest across Kent and there is a substantial lobby favouring no extension of the franchise so that it terminates at the end of March 2012. The contractual provision is for a two year extension subject to parameters that we do not know about and a process that is open to neither scrutiny nor consultation.
- 1.3.8 The first thing to say from a technical procurement point of view is that any normal appointment of a new train operating company by April 2012 would be fraught with difficulty in the time that remains. The tendering processes and service

specification requirements require much longer than this to set up and it does raise questions about the transparency of the current extension exercise there can only be one realistic answer to the review given the limited time left to run for the normal phase of the franchise. The only way the outcome could be any different from an extension would be as a result of the service being considered so bad that a catastrophic response is warranted. There is also the factor of cost because the DfT is unlikely to want to accelerate the end of the franchise. The appointment of a new operator carries with it a substantial cost in its own right and also there is the risk that the tender for the first two years could cost substantially more than the DfT is currently paying.

- 1.3.9 Nevertheless, there is a great depth of local sentiment about poor performance during the recent snow crisis, the absence of reimbursement of season ticket costs for cancelled services, the scale of increases on the line, the feeling that west Kent is suffering because of the focus and support for the High Speed service from mid and east Kent and the poor connections from the Malling area into London. In these circumstances the Board may take the view that it should align itself with and lend its support to the sentiment, widespread across Kent, that there should be a new operator sooner rather than later.
- 1.3.10 The realistic working assumption must be that, the depth of local feeling notwithstanding, that the extension will be granted for reasons that we shall not be privy to. This makes it all the more essential that everyone with a stake in the future quality of rail service provision in Kent takes an active part in the processes towards appointing a new operator for the next franchise, whether that be from April 2012 or from April 2014.
- 1.3.11 The latter date may seem some way off but the fact is that the task of identifying the service specification and carrying out a full exercise of consultation will occupy a substantial period. This will precede a tendering and appointment phase governed by the Public Contracts Regulations that will require advert in the Official Journal of the European Union and other associated procedures that require considerable time. Therefore I expect that we will be seeing the preliminary stages of the project beginning within this calendar year.
- 1.3.12 The County Council has already signalled its intention to 'ring-master' the Kent response to the new franchise. It is involving district councils and local rail user groups across Kent in the Kent Rail Summit and it has produced a 'Rail Action Plan for Kent'. It is currently out for consultation and I have reproduced it at **Annex 8** together with a draft reply recommended for endorsement at **Annex 9**. This is an excellent document and it incorporates broadly what I believe this Council would wish to see included in such a wide ranging Plan for the next franchise.

14 Conclusions

1.4.1 This paper considers and analyses the impact of a considerable number of transportation issues currently applying in this Borough. It emphasises the need for continuing monitoring of the activities and intentions of the main players in transport provision to ensure that the interests of the local community are properly factored into their plans and investment proposals.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None direct on the Borough Council.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 Not applicable.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 The main risk is that lack of involvement across a range of proposals by third party providers will result in this Borough missing out on opportunities to record its views and secure investment in local transportation services. The actions in the report address this.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

1.8.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

1.9 Policy Considerations

1.9.1 Community.

1.10 Recommendations

1.10.1 That Cabinet be recommended as follows;

- 1) That Sir John Stanley's letter as reproduced at **Annex 1** should be formally noted.
- 2) That the Borough Council should continue to press for early completion of the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling scheme Public Inquiry and the letter at **Annex 3** requesting this be endorsed.
- 3) That the West Malling station forecourt remodelling scheme be confirmed as a project that the Borough Council wishes to be included in any future County Council bid for funding through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
- 4) That the schedule of schemes listed at **Annex 5** be endorsed as the Borough Council's priorities for future highways investment.

- 5) That objection to any further stops within the Capital that would further slow down services on the West Malling/Maidstone East line as set out in the Director's letter to the DfT should be endorsed.
- 6) That Cabinet considers its position on the extension of the current franchise for a further two years.
- 7) That peak period Thameslink services on the West Malling/Maidstone East line from April 2012 onwards should be welcomed and supported.
- 8) The reply to the consultation on the Rail Action Plan for Kent at **Annex 9** be endorsed.

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

15 December 2010

County Councillor Nick Chard
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

**Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Response to the
Kent County Council's Draft Consultation Version of the Local Transport
Plan for Kent 2011-2016**

I attach a copy of the letter of December 8 that I received from the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Chief Executive, Mr David Hughes, together with a copy of the Borough Council's response to the above draft Local Transport Plan as set out in the letter of November 25 from the Borough Council's Chief Engineer, Mr Mike McCulloch, to the Transport Policy Team at the County Council which has been approved by the elected Members of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

I have read the Borough Council's response in full and have noted, and entirely support, the Borough Council's constructive, but withering, critique of the fundamentally flawed methodology and the resultant flawed policy conclusions underpinning the Kent County Council's draft Local Transport Plan. I trust you will read the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's response in full yourself and would draw your attention in particular to what is said in:

- 1) Paragraph 1.3.9 where it is stated that the Kent County Council has

cont

From: The Rt. Hon Sir John Stanley, M P



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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completely ignored the Government's Guidance on Local Transport Plans requiring "highway authorities to work closely with district councils to coordinate and align the district produced Local Development Frameworks and the county council produced Local Transport Plans".

- 2) Paragraph 1.4.2 about only 4 Kent districts, one of which is Tonbridge and Malling, having an adopted Core Strategy in place whilst 8 have not and that it is neither reasoned nor fair to distribute transport funding based on what may be only theoretical development figures for the next 5 years for those districts that do not have an adopted Core Strategy in place.
- 3) Paragraph 1.4.4 onwards about the need to base LTP provision on actual development that has been achieved, or is definitely scheduled to proceed, within the 2011-2016 LTP period.

For all these reasons I strongly support the view of the Members of the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council that it is incorrect and unreasonable for the Kent County Council to be concentrating LTP funds only on the Kent Growth Areas and Growth Points.

I also entirely share the dismay and concern of the Members of the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council that the draft Kent County Council Local Transport Plan fails to contain any reference to the Medway Gap, West Malling Station, the dualling of the A21 from Tonbridge to Pembury, the Borough Green and Platt bypass and the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan. These omissions are extremely detrimental and unhelpful to the efforts of Kent MPs like myself, who have been dealing, and continue to deal, with Ministers on such schemes.

In the light of the above, I strongly support the conclusion of the Members of the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council that it is "essential that the draft document be fundamentally reviewed" as far as the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is concerned

cont

From: The Rt Hon. Sir John Stanley, M P



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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I look forward to receiving your response to the above points.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Tracey Crouch MP whose constituency covers the eastern part of the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's area.

By: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment Highways & Waste
Paul Crick, Interim Director of Integrated Strategy and Planning

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 18 January 2011

Subject: Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides the initial results of recent consultation on the draft Local Transport Plan 2011-16 and presents a proposed structure for the LTP3 Implementation Plan based on the Local Transport Settlement in December 2010. Delegated authority is requested for editorial purposes to prepare a final LTP3 Strategy and Implementation Plan for final approval by Full Council on 6th April 2011.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Transport Act 2008 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP), which must be in place by 1st April 2011. The LTP should contain a 'strategy', setting out the authority's key transport objectives, and an 'implementation plan', containing details of the Integrated Transport schemes it intends to deliver in order to meet those objectives.
- 1.2 During the summer, KCC's Transport Policy Team prepared a draft Local Transport Plan 2011-16 (LTP3) to form the basis for public consultation. The draft LTP3 was structured around five themes:
- Growth Without Gridlock;
 - A Safer and Healthier County;
 - Supporting Independence;
 - Tackling a Changing Climate; and,
 - Enjoying Life in Kent.
- 1.3 When the draft LTP3 was prepared, the Coalition Government had yet to agree future funding levels for the five year period of LTP3 but it was clear that funding levels would be reduced. In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste asked for a system of prioritising the Integrated Transport block funding to those measures which will make the greatest contribution to local and national objectives and represent the best value for money. Different ways of doing this were considered and a preferred option was chosen which splits funding between the five LTP3 Themes (budget allocation) and then focuses the investment under each

Theme to those areas and locations where the challenges are most acute (spatial distribution). This approach was subsequently supported by the POSC on 14th September 2010 and formed the basis of the draft LTP3 that went out for consultation on 4th October 2010. Maintenance funding will continue to be prioritised using the formulae set out in KCC's Transport Asset Management Plan.

2. Responses Received from Draft LTP3 Consultation

- 2.1 The draft LTP3 was posted on KCC's website on 4th October 2010 and a letter was sent to over 200 stakeholders, informing them of this and asking them to submit their comments. A 12 week consultation period was specified with a closing date of 31st December 2010.
- 2.2 When consultation closed, 60 responses had been received. The majority of comments related to specific points of emphasis and a clearer reference to certain initiatives being pursued by others. There was also a recognition that the local transport planning landscape has shifted significantly in the interim, particularly as *Growth without gridlock - A transport delivery plan for Kent* was launched on 1st December 2010 and that a significant level of updating for the final LTP3 is required.
- 2.3 The main concern raised was the priority given to the Growth Areas and Growth Points under the LTP3 theme of Growth Without Gridlock to which 45% of Integrated Transport funding is allocated, which does not recognise the high levels of development planned elsewhere in the County. There was a high level of support from those areas that would benefit from this allocation. Also, the proposed spatial distribution for Supporting Independence to the coastal urban areas of East Kent precludes deprived areas in rural areas and in Mid and West Kent. Other comments related to the inclusion of major transport infrastructure which though not funded by LTP funding, would conflict with many of the aims of the LTP relating to reducing carbon emissions and reliance on the private car and the detrimental impact on protected environmental areas.
- 2.4 We also received representations from Essex County Council and Thurrock Council, objecting to the route shown on page 74, linking the proposed Lower Thames Crossing East of Gravesend to the M11. This line, which was for indicative purposes only, will be removed from the final LTP3 document.

3. Local Transport Settlement (2011/12 – 2012/13)

- 3.1 On 13th December 2010, the Government announced the final transport capital block settlement for 2011/12 to 2012/13. This announcement covered the Highways Maintenance Block and the Integrated Transport Block, both of which are calculated using differing needs-based formulae and will be provided as capital grant (not supported borrowing). Indicative funding allocations were also given for 2013-15 and may be subject to change. The allocations for the Kent area are shown below:

	Final Allocation £000s		Indicative Allocation £000s	
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Integrated Transport	8,199	8,746	8,746	12,299
Highways Capital Maintenance	25,272	23,986	22,473	21,328

- 3.2 In previous years, integrated transport funding has been transferred across to maintenance and given the continuing need to maintain Kent's roads plus the impact of recent winter weather, it is planned for 2011/12 that £2.351m will be transferred, leaving £5.848m for integrated transport schemes.

4. LTP3 Implementation Plan

- 4.1 The Local Transport Act 2008 requires that LTPs contain a strategy and implementation plan(s). The strategy is effectively the prioritisation system set out in section 1.3 which determines the priority LTP3 Themes and the areas and locations where funding will be focused. The Implementation Plan(s) sets out the proposals for delivery of the objectives contained in the strategy. Given the lack of funding allocations when the draft LTP3 was written, no specific measures were included in this consultation document though reference was made to the types of schemes that would be considered. The Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste has decided to continue with the Members Highway Fund, which will be funded from the LTP3 Integrated Transport allocation and he is also keen that Crash Remedial Measures continue to be funded. Therefore, the following priority and structure for the LTP3 Implementation Plan is proposed:

4.2 Integrated Transport Funding

Members Highway Fund – £2.2 million per year with £25,000 allocated to each of the 84 County Councillors to fund schemes which solve local transport issues plus £0.1m to administer the fund.

Crash Remedial Measures - measures at sites with a history of injuries due to vehicle crashes

Integrated Transport Measures – remaining funding allocated to local transport improvements using the budget allocation/spatial distribution approach outlined in section 1.3.

4.3 Highways Capital Maintenance Funding

Highways Capital Maintenance – funding allocated to meet the priorities and objectives of KCC's Transport Asset Management Plan.

5. Local Sustainable Transport Fund

- 5.1 In late September 2010, the Coalition Government announced the launch of a new transport fund called the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. This fund of £560 million replaces a range of previous grants for sustainable forms of

travel and will include a mix of £350m revenue and £210m capital funding over the next four years. The fund will be an opportunity for local authorities to take forward sustainable travel measures through their LTPs and to develop packages of measures that support economic growth and reduce carbon. Schemes could include integration between travel modes, walking and cycling measures, better public transport and traffic management schemes. The DfT has yet to publish its guidance and timescales for potential applicants but it is recommended that the County Council submits a bid to this fund and LTP3 will be written in a way that would support this bid, highlighting potential packages of measures that could be put forward. It is therefore important that a robust and high quality LTP3 is adopted to support future bidding opportunities and attract investment for local transport to the County.

6. Recommendations

Members of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

1. Note the summary of responses received to the LTP3 consultation
2. Comment on the proposed structure of the LTP3 Implementation Plan(s)
3. Support a future bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund
4. Delegate authority for editorial changes and production of the final LTP3 to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste for approval at Cabinet and Full Council.

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Rob Smith – Senior Transport Planner

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Background Documents:

Department for Transport, *Guidance on Local Transport Plans*, 2009

Paul Williams
Strategic Roads Investment Projects Division
Zone 4/29
Great Minster House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Contact	Steve Humphrey
Direct line	01732 876256
Email	Steve.Humphrey@tmhc.gov.uk
Fax	01732 876317
Your ref	
Our ref	PTLS/MMC/T12/3
Date	18 January 2011

Dear Mr Williams

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling Scheme

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Committee wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport on 8 July to express the deep concerns of the Board at the postponement of the Public Inquiry for the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling scheme.

I will not repeat the series of significant strategic reasons which make early completion of this project a necessity, not the least of which is safe and efficient access to the new hospital at Pembury. However, all of these reasons remain valid.

You kindly responded to the Council on 12 July outlining the budget pressures arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) that was taking place at the time and explaining the necessity for the moratorium on all preparation works for schemes not yet in the firm programme.

We now know the results of the CSR and the A21 Scheme has slipped back in the programme to the period beyond 2015. This slippage in the programme concerns my Members considerably because it means the critical road safety improvements, access to regeneration areas and alleviation of a major point of congestion on the strategic road network will now be delayed for several years.

This is, of course, disappointing to my Members but it is not the main reason that I am writing to you. The Council is represented on the A21 Reference Group, made up of local authorities and Members of Parliament along the route of the A21.

The Group is extremely keen to ensure that all procedural and administrative impediments to progress on the A21 scheme are removed so that the earliest possible start can be made on the construction just as soon as the budget is confirmed. One of the critical administrative processes to be completed is the Public Inquiry and I would like

to confirm that this Council shares the view of the Reference Group that this should take place as soon as possible.

If you are able to offer any information or advice on the arrangements for the Public Inquiry taking place in the short rather than the longer term, I would be most grateful.

Yours sincerely

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

Annex 4

**Medway Valley Public Transport Strategy
Development Obligations**

Development	Planning Obligation	Contribution ¹	Trigger Point
Ryarsh Brickworks (TM/03/03377/OA) 91 housing units	Contribution for bus service improvements to Ryarsh. <i>(also marketing of the No 58 or 78 or a replacement bus)</i> Offer of bus pass - all adults and children a one month pass. And a one month bus pass for all adults and children resident in Ryarsh Parish	£100K	50% within 28 days of first occupation of the first private housing unit to be occupied and remaining 50% after 25 th ph housing unit
	Traffic calming contribution to Ryarsh and surrounding villages	£25K	Implementation date – on material start of the development.
Kings Hill (TM/02/03429/OAEA & TM/05/00163/FL) Approximately 750 housing units Only around 100 units occupied <i>check</i> Only B1 is Rolex- 6915 sqm 130 built by Feb?	A20 Bus priority junction works	£1.3m	After completion of 200 th housing unit or the end of March 2008, whichever is sooner.
	Increased frequency of 72 service	Offer up to £2.5m to bus service provider – <i>check</i> Quarterly in arrears for a period of 5 years.	After occupation of 300 th housing unit or 15,000m2 of B1 which ever is later.
	Bus lane on Tower View (by condition and by inclusion in Green Travel Plan)	Developer	Condition target- within 12 months of fist occupation- equals Sept 2008 Green Travel Plan – no target date
	Local traffic management and calming measures benefitting pedestrian and cyclists (off site from Mereworth up to Balise Farm roundabout)	£1m (indexed from February 2004)	£100K at Implementation £300K at 300 th occupation (or 15, 000 sqm B1) £600K at 600 th occupation (or 30, 000 sqm B1)
	Gibson Drive/A228 r/b improvements	Developer	Proposals to be submitted before 2 Jan 07, Implemented within 12 months of achieving all necessary consents.
Leybourne Grange (TM/94/01253/OA)	Improved bus/rail interchange at West Malling station	£250K [indexed to Jan04]	Before occupation of the 51 st housing (subject to a formal request by KCC on commencement of development)
	A20 bus priority measures	£250K	Before occupation of the 51 st housing (subject to a formal request by KCC on commencement of

Development	Planning Obligation	Contribution ¹	Trigger Point
<p>Approximately 723 housing units</p> <p>Link road construction started in early July 09 and the Housing commenced 14-09-09</p>	<p>New bus service</p> <p>For a period of 5 years Half-hourly 07.30 till 18.00 Mon- Sat. Maidstone via Tescos and A20 inc access to major Maidstone, Malling and Aylesford schools.</p> <p>WM station via Leybourne and W Malling town centre 07.00 to 19.00 Monday to Friday</p>	<p>Negotiate with bus service provider</p>	<p>development)</p> <p>Reasonable endeavours by 51st housing unit</p>
	<p>Traffic management along Birling Road and A228 Castle Way</p>	<p>£100K</p>	<p>Before occupation of the 51st housing (subject to a formal request by KCC on commencement of development)</p>
<p>Holborough Valley</p> <p>(TM/01/02746/OAEA)</p> <p>Approximately 938 housing units</p> <p><i>Potential for another 250 to take the number to 1250</i></p> <p>Nearly 290 units completed, but approximately only about 270 occupied. Of which about 190 private units occupied</p>	<p>Extension of 71 service</p>	<p>Offer £431K to Arriva as part of negotiations</p>	<p>First occupation</p> <p>Note the triggers are more complex than this and need to be abstracted from the agreement.</p>
	<p>151 Service</p>	<p>£120K</p>	<p>Study into feasibility of increasing service prior to the occupation of 400th private housing unit. 3 instalments, first paid after completion of 500th housing unit</p>
	<p>A20 bus priority service</p>	<p>£250K index linked to August 2004</p>	<p>Deed of Agreement dated 27 August 2004 between Berkeley Homes and KCC. Payable upon the 200th housing unit occupation.</p>
	<p>Snodland Railway Station – Interchange and waiting facilities</p>	<p>£80K</p>	<p>Money now held by KCC</p>
	<p>Bus link between Cemetery Lane, development site and the A228</p> <p>Pedestrian and cycle facilities – Section 278 Agreement</p>	<p>Developer</p> <p>£150K</p>	<p>300th private housing unit</p> <p>Money now held by KCC</p>
<p>Peters Pit</p> <p>(TM/05/00989/OAEA & TM/05/00990/FLEA)</p> <p>Approximately 1000 housing units</p> <p>No development started yet</p>	<p>155 Service – New East Bank Service</p>	<p>Offer of £312K to 155 service provider</p>	<p>50th housing unit</p>
	<p>Junction 4 of M20 – widening of overbridge</p>	<p>£1.25 million</p>	<p>Following a request from KCC within 10 years of the commencement date, payment for the Junction 4 M20 improvement works should be made. If by 400 units the works not done, then applicant can elect to carry out the works themselves, whilst also claiming the Frantschach contribution.</p>
	<p>New West Bank Service</p>	<p>Offer of £327K to a bus service provider</p>	<p>150th housing unit</p>

Development	Planning Obligation	Contribution ¹	Trigger Point
Leybourne Park (Frantschach) (TM/03/03415/FL) 370 housing units Nearly complete – all triggers met	New shuttle bus service to West Malling Station Route specified as being Leybourne Way, Gighill, Chaucer Way, Lunsford Lane, A20 Winterfield Lane, Lucks Hill. Two services an hour Monday – Friday Peak service Mon – Fri 7 – 10 am 4 – 7 pm <i>as agreed with KCC</i>	Developer to provide for 5 years	50 th housing unit
	Local Transport Plan	£190K	Start of development
	Safety Led Scheme	£10K	Start of development
	New Hythe Station upgrade	£52K	Start of development
	Junction 4 of M20 – widening of eastern overbridge	£750K	Within 21 days of KCC letting a contract for the Junction 4 M20 improvement works. This can only be called by KCC within 10 years of a material start of development on the site. Development commenced on approximately March 2006. (John Farmer of KCC)
	Extension of 71 bus service (to Papyrus Way roundabout)	Developer to provide service	50 th housing unit
Halling Cement Works (MC2007/2153) 550 housing units No development started yet	Enhancement and extension of the existing 151 bus service currently in operation between Chatham and West Malling/Kings Hill	Developer to provide service	Prior to the first Occupation of a Housing Unit unless previously otherwise agreed in writing by the Council
	Junction 4 of M20 – widening of eastern overbridge	£100,000 £820,000	Upon Commencement of the Development upon Occupation of the 200th Housing Unit

Planning and Transportation Advisory Board 22 February 2011

Schedule of Potential Transportation Initiatives for the LTP3 Period (2011 – 2016)

Scheme	Comment
Strategic West Kent Initiatives	
A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling Scheme	
A228 Colts Hill Bypass	
Platt and Borough Green Bypass	
A228 Snodland Bypass Dualling	Note: the County Council's long term transportation strategy contains an ambition for a lower Thames Crossing. This will have implications for the A228 corridor so if it ever comes to fruition the need for highway improvements through the route will need to be revisited in detail.
M20 Junction 4 Eastern Overbridge	
Peters Village Medway Crossing	
M25 Junction 5 Eastern Facing Slip Roads	
Strategic Borough Initiatives	
London Road/Hadlow Road Link	
B245/Dryhill Park Road – light controlled junction with pedestrian phase	
A26 Hadlow Road/Yardley Park improvements to junction working investigations required.	
Vale Road/ Vale Rise Junction Improvement	
UTMC for Tonbridge	Extension of coverage of Urban Traffic Management Centre to include Tonbridge.

Development Related Initiatives	
Medway Valley Public Transport Strategy	Complex series of interlinked development obligations and contributions that requires coordination by the local highway authority and, critically, funding support from the LTP.
Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan	This is an adopted Local Development Document that incorporates a transport strategy for central Tonbridge and an implementation plan that should be reflected within the highway authorities planning and investment programme. (see the LDD for schedule of potential schemes).
Air Quality Management Areas - Action Plan	During the currency of LTP3, it can be expected that there will be obligations on local authorities to carry out specific actions to deal with poor air quality. There are six such areas in the Borough and plans to remedy these are likely to be required in due course.
West Malling Station forecourt remodelling	
A228 Kent Street Improvements	
A227 Controlled Crossings at York Parade	In association with Safer Routes to Schools.
The Ridgeway – controlled crossing	In association with Safer Routes to Schools.
Safer Routes to Schools	General programme of assessment and intervention to deal with identified problem locations that present risk for pupils walking to schools.

Cycling Strategy	Completion of a cycling strategy for the Borough leading to a programme of investment on specific initiatives to support the strategy.
A228 Laybys between Ham Hill and Leybourne Way	Lorry parking and management issues.
Hadlow Road – Cannon Lane junction traffic light upgrade	The existing lighting is old and should be dealt with during this LTP period.
Winterfield Lane speed management scheme	
Ringshill, Hildenborough, footway.	Station access issue.
Medway Wharf Rd/Sovereign Way junction improvement.	
Wateringbury Crossroads	Finest of adjustments with white lining within the available space to avoid right turners into Bow Road completely blocking the east bound movement of traffic on Tonbridge Road. (AQMA issue).
A20 Seven Mile Lane junction signalisation	
Leybourne Way to New Hythe Lane footway extension	
Aylesford to Eccles footway	



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The Chief Planning Officer
Local planning authorities in England

14 January 2011

PLANNING POLICY ON RESIDENTIAL PARKING STANDARDS, PARKING CHARGES, AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

My purpose in writing is to inform you of a Ministerial announcement made on 3 January 2011, that outlines the Government's position on certain aspects of parking policy and electric vehicle infrastructure. A copy of the letter issued to the Chair of the DCLG Select Committee is attached.

As you will see, the Government is changing some of the text in Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (PPG13) to better reflect localism. The Government's position on parking standards is that local authorities are best placed to take account of local circumstances and are able to make the right decisions for the benefit of their communities. As such, the central requirement to express "maximum" parking standards for new residential development has been deleted. Local authorities will still need to set parking standards for their areas, but it will be for them to determine what that standard should be, depending on individual circumstances.

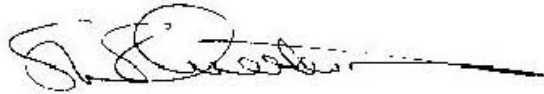
Similarly, the Government believes it is for the local authority to decide what its parking charges should be. Therefore, the reference to using parking charges to encourage the use of alternative modes has also been deleted. The exact changes to the text of PPG13 are set out in the attached letter, but the remainder of PPG13 remains unchanged.

As part of the announcement, the Government has also taken the opportunity to encourage electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new development, where this does not affect the development's overall viability; and has signalled its intention to proceed with proposals to introduce permitted development rights for electric vehicle charging points.

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

If you have any questions arising from this letter please contact
arthur.young@communities.gsi.gov.uk

I am copying this letter to the Planning Inspectorate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Quartermain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

STEVE QUARTERMAIN

Chief Planner

Rail Services (West Kent)

10.59 am

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con): This winter, my rail-travelling constituents, of whom there are a large number, have experienced unprecedented disruption in their rail services, for which they have had to fork out an unprecedented hike in rail fares. This debate is timely and I am very glad to have been able to secure it. I am delighted to see in their places many of my hon. Friends from west Kent constituencies. I want to focus on four issues: specific rail services; the enormous increase in rail fares; the frankly dismal performance of Southeastern, Southern and Network Rail in trying to cope with the difficult weather conditions in December; and the financial penalties regime that applies to train operating companies.

As the Minister knows from the meeting that we had with her in the House of Commons in July 2010, the biggest single rail services issue in my constituency is the axing of services into the key London termini serving the City—Cannon Street, Charing Cross and London Bridge—on the Maidstone East line. Once again, I must stress to the Minister the truly devastating impact that that has had on my constituents and on the constituents of others along the Maidstone East line. As a result of those services being axed, individuals have had to move house, move their children's schools and, in some cases, move jobs. Where they have chosen to stay put, they have had to incur substantial extra travelling time and cost driving to stations all over Kent and, in some cases, to south London to gain access to a station with a better rail service to London.

I was encouraged to receive the Minister's reply in November, in which she said that she was considering options for dealing with this situation. One option, revealed to us in the meeting that Kent MPs had in December with the managing director of Southeastern, was to establish peak-time services on the Maidstone East line into Blackfriars station from May 2012, when its rebuild finishes and new platforms become available. Is that one of the options that the Minister has under consideration? I hope that she will also be able to give us, in her reply to this debate, information about the other options that she has under consideration. I would be particularly grateful for her assurance that, before any final decision is taken on which option to follow, the range of options put before her will be made public and that MPs, rail traveller organisations, local authorities and individual rail travellers will have an option to put their views on those alternatives to the Minister before any final decision is taken.

The other rail service to which I would like to refer specifically and which was axed under the previous Government is the through-rail service on the Tonbridge to Redhill line to Gatwick. We now have, frankly, the ludicrous position where Gatwick is the second largest airport in the UK—2 million people in Kent use it every year—and it is impossible to get a train service from any rail station in Kent, on a through-service basis, to Gatwick airport. The coalition Government pride themselves on their green credentials, but I have to point out that access to Gatwick from Kent is about as non-green as it is possible to be. I hope, therefore, that the Minister will be able to assure us that she and the Secretary of State will look with considerable urgency at the need to restore the through-rail service from Kent to Gatwick airport. That is a necessity and would be highly valued by the people of Kent.

I would like to come to two significant policy points that have a bearing on rail services but cover a wider policy issue. First, the Minister is a London MP and will therefore understand that there is an inevitable tension between the interests of commuters inside London and

those who commute from outside London, because capacity is limited. Last year, in my constituency, I had a situation in which Transport for London unilaterally took over critically important train paths on the Uckfield line, used by Uckfield line commuters trying to get to London, for East London line services. That had devastating consequences for my constituents from Edenbridge in terms of overcrowding and inadequate capacity. This year, we hear that Transport for London is now trying to get Maidstone East line trains to stop at additional stations in London, adding still further to the inadequacy of the services on the Maidstone East line in terms of additional journey time and overcrowding. It is imperative that the Minister and the Secretary of State hold the ring between the interests of those who commute to London from outside the city and those who commute to the centre of the capital from inside. There has to be a fair and reasonable balance between those two competing interests and limited capacity.

Secondly, it is not reasonable to create a position in the commuter areas where train operating companies can axe individual services almost at will. In commuter land, individual families—huge numbers of them—make important decisions and lay out substantial sums of money on the assumption that current rail services will continue. That is the basis on which they buy their homes and decide to send their children to particular schools and, in some cases, whether to accept a particular job. It is simply not reasonable for those people to then find that, almost with no notice, those rail services, on which they are critically dependent for their family life, suddenly disappear. I therefore put it strongly to the Minister, and through her to the Secretary of State, that when they come to their review of franchising policy, they must avoid a situation in which train operating companies can turn individual services on their lines on and off like a kitchen tap. That is simply not acceptable or reasonable, given the massive decisions that individual families make when they locate to a village or town with a particular rail service and a particular station.

On rail fares, it is wholly unreasonable to put them through the roof at a time when people's incomes are either frozen or, in many cases, significantly reduced. That is precisely what has happened to west Kent rail travellers. In west Kent, we feel particularly aggrieved on two scores. First, we feel aggrieved because Southern and Southeastern have justified their fare increases by virtue of investment. I do not deny that Southeastern has made investment, but the issue for us in west Kent is that our rail travellers cannot get any benefit from its two most significant investments. The investments that it has made, under the terms of the integrated Kent franchise, are on the channel tunnel rail link route domestic services into St Pancras and the high-speed services now available on the north Kent line. Those services are of no benefit or use whatsoever to our constituents and rail travellers.

Precisely for that reason, when the integrated Kent franchise was first let, I made strong representations to the then Secretary of State that finances for the channel tunnel rail link domestic services should be ring-fenced. I foresaw exactly what has happened, which is that those of us in west Kent would have to pick up a good proportion of the bill for the financing of those services. Our rail travellers have to pay substantially increased fares as a result of that investment.

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mrs Theresa Villiers): I would like to reassure my right hon. Friend that the RPI plus 3% formula for Kent, which I shall address in my remarks, is not related to high-speed services but to the rolling stock. It was added to the lines on conventional services and is not related to High Speed 1.

Sir John Stanley: I am glad to have my right hon. Friend's assurance, which brings me to my second point. The statement that she just made presents me with even more of a puzzle and sense of grievance than I had previously.

The second point of grievance for west Kent rail travellers is the fact that their rail fare increase is substantially greater than those being faced by commuters on other lines. For example, on the Brighton line, which is operated by First Capital Connect, the fare increase is 3.1%, but the increase for Tonbridge line commuters is 11.8%. I cannot see any reason or justification for why the fare increase for my constituents commuting from Tonbridge should be nearly three times as much as the one for those who commute from Brighton.

I put it to my right hon. Friend that it is imperative, within the limits of the present contractual arrangements entered into by the previous Government, that we re-establish a fairer and more reasonable fare regulation regime. After all, the companies are in effect monopolies, and monopolies tend to exploit. Therefore, one has to couple monopolies with effective and firm regulation, but all the evidence so far, as far as Southeastern and the people of west Kent are concerned, is that a firm and fair regulation system simply does not exist.

I said in a speech almost exactly two years ago, on 20 January 2009:

“I must put it to the Minister that the Government's policy, as far as the thousands of commuters in the south-east are concerned, is resulting in one very clear trend: our commuters—our constituents—are paying ever more for ever less.”—[*Official Report*, 20 January 2009; Vol. 486, c. 727.]

What happened over the cold weather period is that our constituents and commuters actually were paying ever more for no services at all on several days.

My first question to the Minister is about whether she will tackle Southeastern and Southern to bring in a system of reimbursement for rail travellers for the days on which they have paid their fares but are not able to travel. It seems wholly wrong that someone can pay a fare through a season ticket, whether annually or monthly, but not be able to get reimbursement.

A fundamental point I must put to the Minister is that it was shown during the bad weather in December that the investment by Southeastern, Southern and, most particularly, Network Rail has been totally inadequate to deal with severe weather conditions. The franchise arrangements need to be changed to ensure that we have all-weather services.

Michael Fallon (Sevenoaks) (Con): My constituents in Sevenoaks would certainly endorse all the points that my right hon. Friend has made, but does he agree that rather than a blame game between Southeastern and Network Rail over what happened in the winter, we now need a much more effective system of compensation for services that were cancelled or could have been run than we have at present and that the current penalty arrangements need to be thoroughly re-examined in the light of what happened in December?

Sir John Stanley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who rightly anticipates my final point.

Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con): My constituents in Maidstone and The Weald are certainly suffering from the same appalling service outlined by my right hon. Friend: delays, overcrowding, wrong information on websites, lack of toilets, dirty rolling stock, lack of a City of London service, exorbitant rail fares—the list goes on. Does he agree that Kent commuters are feeling very let down and used and abused, and that urgent action is needed?

Sir John Stanley: I wholeheartedly endorse everything that my hon. Friend said. I come now to my final point, which is on penalties.

Gareth Johnson (Dartford) (Con): This is about the issues that Southeastern had to contend with during the recent bad weather. Part of the problem was with communication. Many of my constituents in Dartford were informed by the website that Southeastern advertises that services were running and embarked on treacherous journeys only to find that the services were not, in fact, running. That is part and parcel of the problems that Southeastern needs to overcome.

Sir John Stanley: I wholly agree with my hon. Friend. The communication failures by both Southeastern and Southern during that period were abysmal.

My final point is that the penalties regime is wholly unsatisfactory, because it impacts solely on lateness. One important question for the Minister on a specific issue: is she satisfied with the accuracy and independence of Southeastern's calculation? By the most wafer-thin of wafer-thin margins—0.04%—it has managed to escape financial penalties for lateness in its latest figures.

I come to the wider issue of the gross failure of the penalties regime—this was a failure by the previous Government—which applies to lateness but fails to apply to cancellations. As I said in a letter to the Secretary of State, that produces a perverse financial incentive for train operating companies to cancel services willy-nilly to avoid lateness, but the reality on the ground is that our long-suffering constituents and rail travellers would much rather travel on a train that arrives late than stand at the station from which they want to depart, waiting for a train that has not come.

Mr Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con): As an aside, I am totally taken aback by the Minister's assertion that the 12.8% fare increase experienced in east Kent does not include a contribution towards High Speed 1, because that is certainly not the impression that we have been given in the past.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling has just given the figures used by Southeastern to make the case for not paying compensation, but have the figures not been massaged by including the High Speed 1 service, which is normally fairly reliable? Were that taken out, the case for compensation would be overwhelming. Is it not a greater irony that if compensation were finally paid, the travellers on High Speed 1 would benefit from it?

Sir John Stanley: I am grateful for that intervention. We shall look forward to the Minister's reply in respect of Southeastern's figures. I hope that she and the Secretary of State will look fundamentally at the penalty regime for train operating companies, because it is clearly grossly inadequate and is actually working to the disadvantage of the rail-travelling public.

In conclusion, rail travellers in west Kent are, without doubt, getting a raw deal: they are getting inadequate services at excessive cost. What rail travellers and our constituents in west Kent want are satisfactory services that are accessible from a station reasonably close to their home, at a cost that they can afford. I look to the Secretary of State and the Minister to deliver just that.

11.19 am

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mrs Theresa Villiers): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir John Stanley) on securing the debate on west Kent rail services.

I note the array of Kent MPs who have come to express their concerns today, namely my hon. Friends the Members for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch), for Maidstone and The Weald (Mrs Grant), for North Thanet (Mr Gale), for Dartford (Gareth Johnson) and for Sevenoaks (Michael Fallon).

I cannot think of a set of MPs more assiduous on rail matters than those gathered in the Chamber today. In particular, my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling scrutinises the performance of train operators and Network Rail in his constituency with the greatest diligence, and he holds the Government to account when their decisions impact on passengers. He has expressed serious concerns today.

Before turning to the details that my right hon. Friend has raised, I emphasise the commitment of the coalition to investment in rail as a vitally important part of our transport system and the importance that we devote to improving services for passengers, addressing reliability problems such as those that my right hon. Friend has highlighted.

In the past, the axe has tended to fall first and hardest on infrastructure projects, including rail, following a spending spree. The Government have sought to break away from that, because we know the enormous importance of the rail network to our economy and, of course, to thousands of commuters throughout the country. Over the next four years, we will invest £18 billion in rail capital projects, on top of the money spent day to day on funding rail operations on the network, on infrastructure and on the subsidy for passenger train services. The Southeastern franchise is in receipt of the highest level of subsidy of any train operator in London and the south-east.

We are focused on dealing with capacity issues on services in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. We have secured the funding for Thameslink to be delivered in its entirety, albeit over a slightly longer time frame than originally intended. That major investment programme will virtually double the number of north-south trains running through central London at peak times, delivering up to 1,200 new carriages and providing commuters in Kent, Sussex and Surrey with a wide range of new journey opportunities to central London and beyond.

On the timetable issues highlighted by my right hon. Friend, December 2009 saw a radical overhaul of services throughout the county of Kent, delivering approximately 200 additional services per day as well as the introduction of the UK's first domestic high-speed services. Unfortunately, with change on that scale, the concerns of people on different parts of the line will always mean conflicting interests and trade-offs. However, it is important that such timetable changes are properly consulted on. My right hon. Friend would like me to guarantee that there will be no changes in future to current timetabling arrangements. It would not be wise for me to give that assurance, although I can give an assurance about the importance that the Government place on ensuring that train operators consult the communities affected properly when making major timetabling decisions.

I am very much aware of the constituents of my right hon. Friend who are unhappy about the impact of the December '09 timetable on the services at their station. As we heard from my right hon. Friend, I met him and others who are in the Chamber today at a meeting to discuss the issues, and they urged me to reassess the decision taken by the previous Government to

remove direct services from Maidstone East to Cannon Street. I agreed to review the business case for the service and to look again at Labour's decision not to introduce the service.

Following initial evaluation of the business case, I asked my officials to work with Southeastern to assess a range of options that could improve services to stations in the Maidstone area. That work is ongoing, and I am not as yet in a position to share any conclusions with my right hon. Friend or the Chamber, but I hope to write to him about the conclusions by the end of February. We are still assessing the different options. However, I emphasise that, given the current state of the public finances, changes will only be possible if they do not require funding from the Government in addition to the substantial sums already subsidising the Southeastern franchise and the infrastructure supporting it.

My right hon. Friend raised the Uckfield line issues resulting from Transport for London's decision to strengthen services on the East London line. Again, that is a controversial matter. Local authorities are involved in deciding how rail services will be configured through a system of increments and decrements, which was what operated in that case. However, I emphasise that decisions on such changes must always take into account the interests of all the communities affected.

I can give an assurance to my right hon. Friend that the Government, in the decisions they take on the configuration of rail services, very much take on board the interests of those who live in London and those who live outside. In response to his concerns about whether his constituents are getting proper consideration in such decisions in comparison with people who live inside London, it is important to treat both groups fairly.

Looking ahead, the completion of Thameslink work at London Bridge in 2018 will trigger another extensive recast of train services throughout much of the county of Kent. Network Rail is developing options for the shape of those services from 2018, but decisions will not be made for some years yet. However, my right hon. Friend's input into those decisions will be very welcome.

A number of my hon. Friends have expressed concern about disruption to rail services in Kent as a result of the severe weather in November and December. Throughout the crisis, officials were in constant touch with the rail industry, and the Secretary of State and I were also in contact with senior management at Network Rail and at the various train operators. Some disruption is inevitable in extreme weather conditions, but we need to ensure that transport operators work as hard as possible to deliver the services that are feasible in such circumstances.

On reliability as opposed to cancellations and the perverse incentives that my right hon. Friend is concerned about, I have urged the rail industry to consider how it assesses punctuality to ensure that it works on overall reliability as well as seeking to minimise cancellations and instances of significant lateness.

Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con): Will the Minister give way?

Mrs Villiers: Unfortunately, I have only a few minutes left.

The Secretary of State also asked David Quarmby to audit the performance of rail operators during the severe weather conditions, and his conclusions make it clearer than ever that rail operators and Network Rail must do much better on the provision of information to passengers about the new timetables imposed as a result of severe weather conditions. We are

looking to the rail industry to respond to and learn lessons from what happened, and to do much better on providing accurate information to passengers about the impact of disruption.

We are also urging Network Rail to address the fragility seemingly revealed in the infrastructure on the part of the rail network served by Southeastern. Network Rail is looking to extend its trial on heating the conductor rail at key locations. It is also working to test the use of de-icing equipment on passenger trains.

Last week, I met senior representatives of the rail industry to assess overall performance after the severe weather. I singled out Kent and emphasised to Network Rail that improving the performance of the rail infrastructure used by the Southeastern franchise is vital. The rail industry's national task force will, as a result, be reviewing operational performance of Southeastern and Network Rail in Kent. I emphasise that the review will not be limited to the adverse weather episode and will cover general performance levels. I expect senior figures from the operator and from Network Rail to discuss the work of the national task force with me.

The compensation and penalty arrangements that my right hon. Friend asked about are set out in the franchise. We take every step to ensure that train operators, whether Southeastern or anyone else, comply with their obligations. The passenger charter and compensation arrangements have to be regularly audited by an independent body. The penalties regime is also kept under review. I have no reason to believe that the figures produced by Southeastern have been inaccurate, and the franchise requires independent auditing.

11.30 am

Sitting suspended.

RAIL ACTION PLAN FOR KENT

**Final Draft for Consultation
22 December 2010**



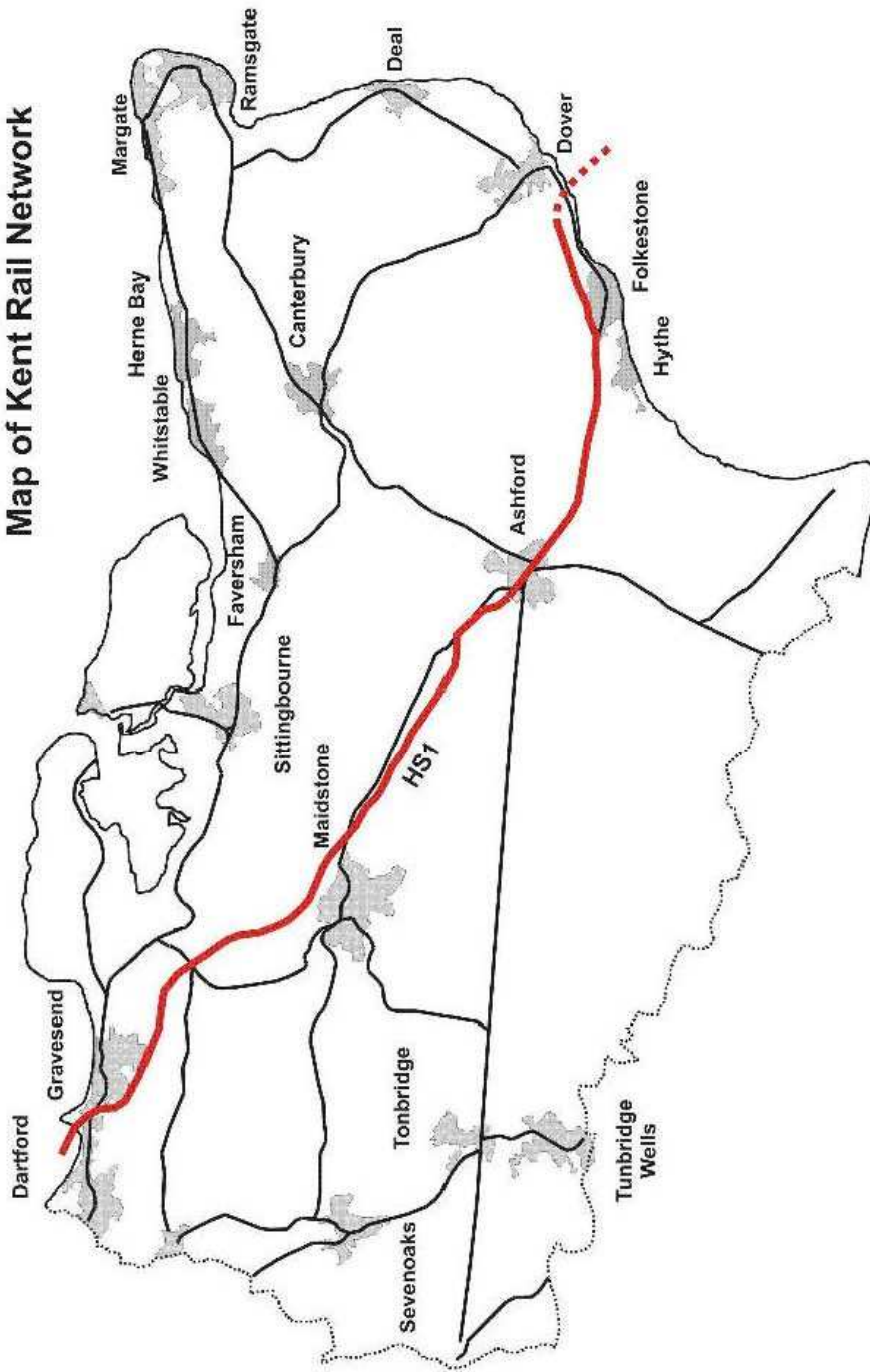
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FOREWORD

By Nick Chard

KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste

We live in exciting and challenging times. We need to ensure that the right conditions are in place for the economic regeneration and growth that we all want to see in Kent. Only from economic growth can we provide for our children's future and create the opportunities for business, education, employment and leisure that are so crucial to the life of the County of Kent and its people.

The rail service in Kent is a key driver of these noble objectives. A modern, efficient, safe, punctual and reliable rail service that takes people where they need to go at a time of day that meets their needs is central to the transport objectives of Kent County Council. Only by ensuring the provision of good rail links to the right London termini, and between stations within Kent, can we enjoy a rail service that not only meets the needs of today's travellers, but that is able to respond to the ever increasing pressures of tomorrow's passengers too.

The location of Kent between London and continental Europe offers great potential for our county. We intend to continue to ensure that both Ebbsfleet and Ashford international stations are well served by through rail services to European capitals, by Eurostar and - in the future - by the proposed Deutsche Bahn services.

So Kent County Council will work hard to stand up for Kent's residents and commuters, acting as a community leader, influencing the decision-making process which will result in the award of a new Integrated Kent Franchise in 2014. We must all ensure that, whoever is the provider, Kent will enjoy the very best rail service which will meet the needs of all its residents and visitors.

Nick Chard



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i Kent's Transport Strategy is encapsulated in two key documents: 'Growth without Gridlock' (December 2010); and 'Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016' (draft, September 2010). These policies summarise Kent County Council's (KCC) transport policy and inform this Rail Action Plan for Kent.
- ii This Rail Action Plan for Kent sets out the principal objectives of KCC to ensure that the new franchise - which is due to commence in April 2014 - delivers a rail service for Kent that meets the needs of the county's residents and visitors. It is not concerned with changing the existing franchise operated by Southeastern Railway, although KCC will continue to press for improvements in its current operation. The Plan lists in detail the rail routes which need addressing in today's network, and recommends improvements to be incorporated in the new franchise specification. It also recognises the need for the level of rail fares charged in Kent to offer better value for money, so as to encourage economic growth throughout the county.
- iii This Plan therefore sets out the legislative and regulatory framework which determines the structure of the rail industry and the way it affects Kent; the operation of the existing Southeastern franchise and its successes and failures; the need for a new rail service post-2014 which will meet the future needs of economic growth in the county; and the plans of Network Rail to enhance some of the principal routes in Kent and thus improve journey times.
- iv KCC will also continue to engage with its partners in Europe to ensure the retention of Kent stops on the existing international services, the provision of Kent stops on emerging rail services to the continent, and the possible delivery over time of a new Trans-Manche Metro service linking Kent with Nord-Pas de Calais in partnership with Conseil Regional Nord-Pas de Calais.
- v Following extensive public engagement and consultation, the final version of this Rail Action Plan for Kent will inform KCC's submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the awarding of the contract for the delivery of the Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) from 2014 onwards.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is the largest local authority in the operating area currently managed by Southeastern Railway. As such KCC is a principal stakeholder in the re-franchising process which will be undertaken by the DfT in the period leading up to the award of the new franchise in April 2014.
- 1.2 The County Council is already engaged with both Southeastern Railway and Network Rail, through stakeholder briefings, Rail Summits, consideration of route and service enhancements, and in many other ways involving regular contact. Other stakeholders such as Medway Unitary Authority (UA) and East Sussex County Council are similarly engaged, and KCC welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with others in this way. This Rail Action Plan for Kent (RAPK) is concerned with the administrative county of Kent, but there are five stations in Medway UA to which reference is made: Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham.
- 1.3 The railway industry is highly regulated and controlled. The following chapters explain both the transport policy context within which KCC operates – and in which this Plan is rooted – and also the legislative and regulatory framework which determines the structures of today’s railway. Our role is to listen, to judge, and to inform: to listen to the many Rail User Groups (RUGs) which represent many of Kent’s rail passengers; to make a judgement about the most effective use of the resources which will be available to serve the rail network in our county; and to inform the franchise-making process of Kent’s collective view.
- 1.4 Kent’s rail network is the result of historic competition between rival railway companies in the 19th century; consolidation under the Southern Railway and then British Railways in the 20th century; and dramatic change delivered by the present franchise operator with the arrival of High Speed services which have transformed journey times between East Kent and London in the 21st century.
- 1.5 KCC does not pretend to know all the answers, but the County Council does value highly its dual role: to develop a strategic rail network which will help to deliver the economic growth we need during the next 30 years; and to represent the genuine aspirations of Kent’s travelling public, standing up for the people of Kent. It is these twin goals that this Rail Action Plan for Kent seeks to deliver.

2. KENT'S TRANSPORT POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Kent County Council's (KCC) current transport strategy is encapsulated in two principal documents: Growth without Gridlock (December 2010); and Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016 (LTP3) (draft for consultation, September 2010).

Growth without Gridlock

- 2.2 KCC's framework for regeneration titled 'Unlocking Kent's Potential: opportunities and challenges' identified the need for an Integrated Transport Strategy as one of the key drivers to deliver long lasting regeneration and economic growth in Kent. 'Growth without Gridlock' addresses the key transport solutions that need to be implemented over the next 20 years, and fully complements the framework for economic growth.
- 2.3 'Growth without Gridlock' recognises the potential of Kent's rail network to meet these challenges. The delivery of High Speed domestic rail services in December 2009 has transformed journey times for many passengers, but the new timetable introduced by Southeastern has also caused serious problems for others. This Rail Action Plan for Kent addresses all these issues, and using 'Growth without Gridlock' as a starting point seeks to develop a strategy for an improved rail network that will better serve the people in Kent from 2014 onwards.

Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016

- 2.4 The preparation and adoption of an LTP is a statutory requirement under the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008.
- 2.5 LTP3 has incorporated the strategy of 'Growth without Gridlock' which identifies the need for major transport improvements for which KCC will lobby, such as enhancements to the classic rail network. The County Council also seeks to maximise the potential of High Speed 1, by ensuring that the new franchise from 2014 onwards makes the most effective use of this rail infrastructure and the Class 395 High Speed trains.

Kent's Rail Network

- 2.6 The county's rail network (including Medway UA) comprises four principal routes: High Speed 1 (HS1) from the Thames Tunnel via Ebbsfleet and Ashford to the Channel Tunnel portal; Mainline from Knockholt via Tonbridge (with Hastings line via Tunbridge Wells), Ashford and then via both Canterbury West and Dover & Deal to Ramsgate; Mainline from Swanley via the Medway Towns and Faversham to Ramsgate via Herne Bay and to Dover via Canterbury East; and Mainline from Swanley via Otford and Maidstone East to Ashford.

- 2.7 There are also five secondary routes: from Dartford via Gravesend and Strood to Paddock Wood via Maidstone West; from Sittingbourne to Sheerness; from Ashford to Hastings via Appledore and Rye; from Tonbridge to Redhill; and between Oxted and Uckfield via Edenbridge Town.
- 2.8 Appendix 2 sets out in detail the proposed service specification for each of these routes, recommending changes where necessary to the existing franchise specification in order to deliver a rail service that is better suited to the needs of Kent.
- 2.9 KCC has developed close working relationships with Southeastern and Network Rail in recent years, and will continue to work closely with the current rail service franchisee through their stakeholder briefings and KCC's Rail Summits. The County Council has already influenced the development of Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for Kent, covering infrastructure development between 2010 and 2020.

International Rail Services

- 2.10 LTP3 also recognises the important role that international rail services will continue to play in the economic regeneration of Kent. The EU's liberalisation of laws restricting the operation of international rail services in 2010 seeks to break existing monopolies in order to stimulate competition for rail services between EU Member States. Deutsche Bahn (DB) has formally proposed and received permission from the EU to operate through rail services from Germany and Holland to the UK, and a DB trial journey with an ICE test train has been viewed favourably by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority. KCC will lobby for a Kent station stop to be eventually included in this service, which is expected to commence in 2013.

Domestic Rail Services

- 2.11 The domestic rail network is recognised by LTP3 as playing a strategic role in the provision of rail transport to every part of the county. Kent is fortunate to have such an extensive electrified network covering almost the whole county, and the Rail Action Plan for Kent will reflect the priorities of LTP3 in ensuring that access to education, employment, health, retail and leisure facilities will be available wherever possible by rail. However, LTP3 also recognises the serious problems which have arisen on some Mainline routes following the December 2009 timetable change, and these concerns will be included in the Rail Action Plan for Kent as part of KCC's submission to the DfT for the post-2014 franchise.
- 2.12 The development of Manston Airport and the economic regeneration of Thanet are twin objectives supported by LTP3. The provision of a Parkway station near to Manston, along with the delivery by Network Rail of proposed line speed improvements between Ashford and Ramsgate, would meet both these objectives. These improvement works could reduce running times by up to ten minutes between London and Thanet Parkway,

and a full business case for the scheme is currently being developed with an expected completion date for delivery of the scheme in 2014. The creation of a Parkway station here would be a key driver for the economic regeneration of deprived wards throughout Thanet, and should help to reduce the district's welfare bill of £180 million per annum.

- 2.13 KCC's commitment to integrated transport is recognised with the inclusion in LTP3 of a pledge to work closely with partners to deliver improvements to aid interchange at rail stations for people travelling by sustainable modes. This would include improvements to bus access, cycle parking and walking and cycling routes.
- 2.14 LTP3 supports the continuation of KCC's bi-annual Kent Rail Summits which bring together representatives of Southeastern, Network Rail, Passenger Focus and local Rail User Groups (RUGs). These summits address the problems that Kent's rail passengers are experiencing, as well as the benefits of the High Speed services and future aspirations. The views expressed at these events will be used to inform KCC's response to the draft specification for the next Integrated Kent Franchise, which is due to commence in April 2014.

3. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Railways Act 1993 privatised British Rail and divided the ownership and maintenance of the infrastructure from the operation of the trains. Ownership of the track, signalling and power systems passed to a new company, Railtrack, and passenger train operations were initially split into 26 separate franchises which were the subject of competitive tendering. Following serious problems in the industry, Railtrack was abolished and replaced by a new public company, Network Rail (NR). Meanwhile the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), which had been created in 2001 with a remit to improve the overall planning and direction of the railways, was abolished by the Railways Act 2005 which passed most of its functions to the DfT.
- 3.2 The DfT now has overall strategic and financial responsibility for the railways, and is the national authority which procures rail services and projects. A five-year High Level Output Statement specifies what the Government wants to buy from the railway in terms of capacity, performance and safety, and this is accompanied by a Statement of Funds Available and a long-term rail strategy.
- 3.3 NR owns, operates, maintains and develops the main rail network in Great Britain, including tracks, signalling, structures and level crossings. It also owns and operates 18 of the larger stations such as the London termini – others are owned by NR but operated by franchised passenger train operators such as Southeastern.
- 3.4 The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) is responsible for regulating the national rail network operator NR. Since 2006 it has also become a combined safety and economic regulator, responsible for rail safety. The ORR also grants licences to the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to operate passenger trains.
- 3.5 Passenger TOCs are granted franchises by the DfT, which specifies and lets contracts to TOCs such as Southeastern to run franchised passenger services for a specified period of time. The TOCs and NR also have to undertake track and station access agreements which require ORR approval.
- 3.6 The TOCs do not own any rolling stock – they lease it from Rolling-Stock Companies (ROSCOS) which generally own these assets for a period of about 30 years. Typically a given asset will therefore be leased by its ROSCO to a number of TOCs during the asset's lifetime. This arrangement safeguards the use of new rolling-stock by ensuring that its ownership is retained by its ROSCO, and it also enables TOCs to operate newer rolling stock than would otherwise be the case if the TOC had to own the asset for the limited period of its franchise.
- 3.7 The Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) is a membership based organisation consisting of the TOCs which operate passenger rail

- 3.8 Passenger Focus is the statutory body which represents the concerns of rail passengers. It aims to influence decisions that affect passengers, and to work closely with the rail industry, other passenger groups and the Government to secure improvements to passenger rail services.
- 3.9 Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) promotes economic activity and improved public transport links in the rural communities of Kent. This body also supports the Kent Community Rail Partnership (CRP) which promotes use of the Sittingbourne-Sheerness and Medway Valley lines in the county. KCC welcomes the support of ACRK and the Kent CRP in our endeavours to improve the quality of rail passenger transport in Kent, which is an essential public service on which so many rural communities depend.

4. EXISTING SOUTHEASTERN FRANCHISE: 2006-2014

- 4.1 The former Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) published the Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) Stakeholder Briefing Document (SBD) in January 2005. This set out the requirements of the new franchise for passenger rail services in Kent, which was to run from 1 April 2006 – initially for a period of six years with a possible two-year extension. Southeastern is at present meeting its delivery targets, and if it continues to do so it will be automatically offered the two-year extension to its initial franchise period by the DfT, from 2012 to 2014.
- 4.2 Prior to the publication of IKF SBD, and following the earlier termination of the Connex South Eastern franchise in November 2003 following that operator's poor record of customer service, punctuality and reliability, the SRA's publicly-owned subsidiary South Eastern Trains (SET) had operated services across south-east London, Kent and East Sussex.
- 4.3 The SRA was very prescriptive. Its IKF SBD set out detailed requirements of level of service, frequency and route pattern. Each station in Kent had the frequency of its service to its specified London termini determined for each peak and off-peak period on Monday to Friday, and while a successful TOC bidding for the franchise could increase this level of service it would do so at its own commercial risk. Some existing services were also excluded from the new IKF – e.g. Maidstone East via West Malling to Cannon Street.
- 4.4 Southeastern Railway was the successful bidder for the IKF, and commenced its delivery of the new franchise on 1 April 2006. At the award stage the DfT was committed to a total revenue subsidy of £585 million over the full period of eight years, with fares to increase at RPI +3% until 2012. Since then, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has determined that rail fares throughout England will increase by RPI +3% (instead of RPI +1%) from 2012, so the higher than average fare increases experienced in Kent will in future be matched by those elsewhere in England. The original revenue surplus forecast for the final two years of the franchise between 2012 and 2014 has now been replaced with additional revenue subsidy from the DfT to reflect the economic downturn, and so there is no expectation of any financial surplus from the present operator of the IKF.
- 4.5 Southeastern has made significant investment in the rail network in Kent in recent years. Commitments have included a £17.6 million programme to install high quality CCTV on all trains, passenger-load weighing equipment on trains to tackle overcrowding, and improved passenger information systems and station security. The TOC also plans to raise the benchmark for the number of trains arriving within 5 minutes of scheduled time from 89.2% in 2008 to 93.74% in 2014.



- 4.6 In 2006 Southeastern introduced new early morning and late evening services to target increased demand in the shoulder-peaks, and further improvements were made in 2007 to improve capacity and punctuality. The greatest change was the introduction of a completely new timetable in December 2009 which included the delivery of the full Class 395 High Speed service using HS1 to London St Pancras from a range of stations in Kent, and the consequential recasting of Mainline services to the other London termini. It is this last element of the timetable change which has caused serious concerns among RUGs and Passenger Focus, and it is these concerns – amongst others – that KCC wishes to address in this Rail Action Plan for Kent.
- 4.7 There is one further change to the existing service level agreement which has been proposed by the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL) for introduction in December 2012. The Mayor and TfL have requested that additional stops at Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye in south London be included on Maidstone East line trains to Victoria. These proposed stops are intended to replace in part the withdrawal of the south London line service between Victoria and London Bridge from this date, when the London Overground service will be extended from New Cross Gate to Clapham Junction.
- 4.8 KCC has already objected to this proposal in the strongest possible terms, as it would have an extremely detrimental effect on rail passengers using the Maidstone East line. This route has already become the cinderella of the Southeastern rail network; to impoverish it still further with these additional stops and longer journey times would cause serious further hardship for the many Kent residents whose daily journeys to and from London on this line are already far longer than appropriate for the county town of Kent.
- 4.9 There is one further aspect of the current Southeastern franchise which has caused extreme concern throughout Kent. The performance of the franchise operator's services during Winter periods has been abysmal, with extended delays, cancellations and even overnight journeys. But it is not primarily these failures which have caused the anger and frustration of Southeastern's commuters: it is overwhelmingly the almost complete lack of accurate and up-to-date information about the delays and cancellations which has caused the greatest complaints. While neighbouring suburban and home county rail operators such as South West Trains and Southern displayed accurate information on their websites and at stations about the operation of services, Southeastern initially provided totally inadequate information on its own website which often contradicted that which it had provided for National Rail enquires on theirs. To be worthy of winning a new franchise in 2014, Southeastern must radically improve their provision of information, ensuring that it is relevant, accurate and up-to-date when inclement Winter weather strikes again. Anything less will be regarded, not just by KCC, but by stakeholders across the county, as totally unacceptable.

5. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND A NEW RAIL SERVICE FOR KENT

- 5.1 The SRA had recognised the importance of the influence of local authorities in determining the pattern of rail services that were included in the original IKF SBD when bids were invited for the existing franchise:
- “The SRA is aware of the aspirations of regional and local authorities in relation to redevelopment and inward investment. It is essential, therefore, that in the design of new railway services such as that arising from the completion of the CTRL [now HS1], full account is taken of plans for future land use and economic activity. The development of a new franchise that can not only provide services on the existing network, but also offer new domestic links between Kent and London on the CTRL, can only be viewed as a major advance in service provision for the whole of the region.”
- 5.2 ‘21st Century Kent’ identifies the main development areas in Kent and the major infrastructure and other measures needed to support future growth. At the district level, Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) provide a long-term vision and objectives for an area, ensuring that new development is in the right place to meet people’s needs whilst minimising the impact on existing communities, transport and the environment.
- 5.3 KCC’s principal framework for economic growth is titled ‘Unlocking Kent’s Potential: Opportunities and Challenges (2009-2020)’. This framework identifies the key issues that must be addressed to deliver long-lasting economic growth in the county, and establishes a series of priority areas for action by KCC and its partners for the next 20-25 years.
- 5.4 ‘Unlocking Kent’s Potential’ redefines regeneration to include not only economic growth but also transformation in education and skills, culture, civic spirit, tackling climate change and improving housing conditions. It sets a clear direction for achieving economic growth and diversifying employment in Kent, and it recognises the key role of transport in the successful delivery of all these objectives.
- 5.5 The provision of a new rail service for Kent is therefore critical to the county’s regeneration objectives, especially in East Kent where the county’s areas of greatest deprivation are located, as it will provide the primary mode of public passenger transport which should be a driver for new employment, education and business opportunities. This is especially critical in Thanet, where the proposed Thanet Parkway should provide the incentive required for the expansion of Manston Airport and for new economic growth in this district; in Dover, where the aspiration of Dover District Council to have an under the hour service between Dover and London on High Speed, together with enhanced parking at Dover Priory, will be a significant benefit to Dover Pride and to the regeneration of the town; and in Deal and Sandwich, where an improved rail service to these coastal towns should stimulate the local economy in this part of the county.

KCC's aspirations for the new Kent franchise are therefore rooted in the opportunities and challenges set out in 'Unlocking Kent's Potential'.



6. TOWARDS THE NEW FRANCHISE: 2014+

- 6.1 The award of the new franchise agreement for the passenger rail network in south-east London and Kent will be made by the Secretary of State for Transport following a recommendation from the DfT. Between now and April 2014 the DfT will engage in extensive stakeholder consultation, and KCC will have a key role to play in this process as the principal transport authority in the franchise area. To this end we shall also engage with our neighbouring transport authorities within the new Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and also with those in Greater London, so as to ensure the delivery of the most effective rail service for the new franchise within the budgetary constraints that will be determined by the DfT.

Rail Action Plan for Kent

- 6.2 This Rail Action Plan for Kent (RAPK) therefore sets out the objectives that KCC wishes to see incorporated in the new franchise. In doing so KCC does not profess to be expert in the operation of the rail network, nor proficient in the most economic allocation of rolling-stock and crew resources. Rather we seek to represent the aspirations of the people of Kent for a new rail service which reflects the needs of our county, drives economic growth, meets the targets of our Growth Areas at Ashford and Thames Gateway (Kent) and of our Growth Points at Dover and Maidstone, and ensures the provision of a reliable, useful, safe, clean and punctual railway which meets the current and future business, education, employment and leisure needs of the people of Kent.
- 6.3 KCC's aspirations for the new franchise therefore seek to realise these objectives. As always, a balance must be struck between that which is desired and that which is deliverable, and this balance will inevitably be determined by the level of revenue subsidy provided by the DfT for the period of the new franchise. The current economic climate will clearly have a significant impact on this, but KCC hopes that the new franchise will be granted for a much longer period than the existing agreement – at the very least for a period of ten years until 2024, and KCC understands this could be for up to 15 years – and that its aspirations will not therefore be entirely circumscribed by the DfT's current financial constraints.



KCC's Key Requirements

- 6.4 KCC's key requirements for each route of the new franchise are listed below. They do not refer to every section of route within Kent, but reflect the principal causes of concern raised by MPs, KCC Members, RUGs and individuals before, during and after our Rail Summits held in March and October 2010 :
- (i) There should be a regular peak-period Mainline service to designated West End and City stations on each principal rail route in Kent. By West End is meant Charing Cross or Victoria; by City is meant Blackfriars or Cannon Street. There should also be a regular off-peak period service to a designated West End station from each major town in Kent;
 - (ii) Connectivity at Dover Priory between Mainline from Sandwich / Deal and High Speed to St Pancras must be improved from the present 49 minute wait during off-peak periods. The extension of High Speed from Dover Priory to Ramsgate via Deal / Sandwich should also be considered for inclusion in the new franchise provided that this can be delivered with existing rolling-stock resources;
 - (iii) Connectivity at Ashford between Mainline from Dover / Folkestone and Mainline via Maidstone East will already have been improved off-peak towards London from the December 2010 timetable change – this principle should now be applied to peak periods in both directions;
 - (iv) Connectivity at Sittingbourne between the Sheerness branch and High Speed / Mainline services needs to be improved, removing the existing long connection periods;
 - (v) Journey times on Mainline between stations on the North Kent line and Victoria / Cannon Street have been greatly increased with the new timetable – there needs to be a realignment of the station stopping pattern to facilitate this, and if demand continues to be very low for the peak period High Speed service east of Faversham consideration may need to be given to the removal of this part of the service from the new franchise, as passengers from Thanet will anyway travel via Canterbury West on High Speed as it is significantly faster;
 - (vi) NR has indicated its willingness to engage with KCC in funding GRIP (Governance of Rail Investment Process) 1-2 studies into route enhancement schemes for Ashford-Thamet and Ashford-Hastings – services between Ashford and Thanet would reflect future infrastructure improvements which would also serve to reduce running times on High Speed and Mainline between London and Thanet;

- (vii) The present level of service provided on the Maidstone East line is completely unacceptable, and the new franchise must address this omission above all else – initially there should be an hourly service all day between Maidstone East and Blackfriars (using paths currently allocated to half of the First Capital Connect service from Sevenoaks via Otford) so as to provide a direct service all day to the City; this would be replaced by an all day half-hourly Thameslink (Key Output 2) service to Blackfriars, Farringdon, St Pancras and north from 2018;
- (viii) NR has also indicated its willingness to engage with KCC in funding a GRIP 1 & 2 stage study into the feasibility of High Speed services operating along the Medway Valley line from Ebbsfleet via Gravesend to Maidstone West from 2014 – this would help to fill the serious gap that exists in rail provision for the county town of Kent, and should be deliverable with existing rolling stock resources given the reduction that has already been made from 12-car to 6-car formation on the High Speed peak period service on the North Kent line via Faversham;
- (ix) The Cannon Street service from Hastings via Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks should be retained, and not replaced by new Thameslink KO2 service in 2018 – principal Kent termini for Thameslink KO2 service should be Maidstone East (via Otford and West Malling) and Sevenoaks (via Otford and Bat & Ball);
- (x) Parkway Stations – ‘Growth without Gridlock’ proposed development of parkway stations at Thanet for Manston Airport and Isle of Thanet - NR has already produced GRIP stage 1 report with KCC support for the parkway station, and funding is being pursued by KCC through the Regional Growth Fund (RGF), local businesses and developers; Maidstone – for park & rail to/from Maidstone East and London on Mainline service; and Westenhanger - off M20 junction 11; and Appledore - for Romney Marsh and Tenterden;
- (xi) Through Gatwick – Tonbridge – Ashford hourly all day service in partnership with Gatwick Airport Ltd and operator of new franchise for Southern operating area could commence in 2015 – not part of IKF but would affect route between Tonbridge and Ashford;
- (xii) KCC intends to lobby Government to ensure that a requirement to introduce ITSO ticketing is included in new IKF. This would provide the potential for integrated bus/rail ticketing;
- (xiii) The County Council would also expect to see ongoing improvements to the station environment (cleanliness, comfort, security, information etc) and to integration with other modes of transport (i.e. the whole journey experience).

- 6.5 Appendix 2 lists the recommended service levels for each route, and incorporates these key requirements for peak and off-peak periods on Monday to Friday.
- 6.6 KCC also recognises the need for the level of rail fares charged in Kent to offer better value for money, so as to encourage economic growth throughout the county. While KCC recognises that regulated rail fares policy is determined by Government, the county council will continue to press for a reduction in the annual level of increase in regulated fares charged across Kent, which is currently set by the DfT at RPI +3%.

7. NETWORK RAIL AND THE KENT RUS: PRINCIPAL PROPOSED ROUTE ENHANCEMENTS IN CP4 (2009-2014) & CP5 (2014-2019)

- 7.1 The Kent Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) was published by NR in January 2010. It considers how best to meet capacity challenges on the railway network in Kent between now and 2020. It also covers other passenger services in Kent currently operated by Southern between Ashford and Hastings. The period planned by the Kent RUS covers NR's Control Period 4 (CP4) between 2009 and 2014, and Control Period 5 (CP5) between 2014 and 2019. The first part of the plans in the Kent RUS is therefore planned for delivery within the period of the current franchise operated by Southeastern.
- 7.2 Schemes planned for delivery in CP4 include increasing capacity by means of platform lengthening, with all high peak trains via Tonbridge likely to be 12-car formations within the next few years; some further 8-car operations on the Maidstone East line; and further 12-car formations via Rochester are anticipated. Due to platform length constraints at critical sites such as Charing Cross and Tunbridge Wells, all Mainline lengthening requires use of class 375 rolling stock with selective door opening.
- 7.3 Also in CP4, the major East Kent resignalling scheme will commence in May 2011, initially involving the remodelling of the track layout in the Faversham, Margate and Ramsgate areas. The next stage will cover the constrained section of railway through the Medway towns, where it is anticipated that there will be an increase in frequency of trains in the Rochester to Gillingham corridor together with increased turnback capacity.
- 7.4 In the latter half of CP4 a period of significant and extended changes to services across a wide area will commence, linked to the Thameslink Programme remodelling works at London Bridge. Current expectations are that the remodelling will be delivered in two phases. The first of these is envisaged to involve Charing Cross trains being unable to call at London Bridge, while the second is expected to involve Cannon Street trains unable to call. The completion of the Thameslink Programme works at London Bridge, currently scheduled for 2018, will involve an extensive recast of services across Kent and other counties.
- 7.5 Longer term plans in the RUS that could be delivered in CP5 (2014-2019) include the possible extension of Crossrail from Abbey Wood to Gravesend, the possible extension of the London Underground Bakerloo Line to Hayes (thus freeing capacity at London termini for Kent services), and a further solution to capacity problems on the two-track section of Mainline between Orpington and Tonbridge.
- 7.6 In summary, the Kent RUS proposes the following principal interventions between now and 2020, although it should be noted that most of these would be dependent on funding and rolling stock procurement by the existing and new TOCs of the IKF:

- (i) implement CP4 committed schemes as planned, including Thameslink and train lengthening;
- (ii) commence detailed development of post-Thameslink timetable, with peak services generally modified to run at 15 or 30 minute intervals;
- (iii) further train lengthening in CP5 with approx. 100 extra coaches to ensure all high peak trains and the busiest shoulder peak trains run with maximum capacity;
- (iv) improve access to stations and integration with other transport modes
- (v) prioritise incremental journey time improvements.

8. PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 KCC intends to invite extensive public and stakeholder engagement in the delivery of its RAPK.
- 8.2 The first stage will be the circulation of the draft RAPK to MPs, KCC Members, District Councils, neighbouring councils, Southeastern, Southern, NR, RUGs and interested individuals in December 2010. Responses will be expected by the end of February 2011, and the final version of the RAPK will then be presented to the third KCC Rail summit in April 2011.
- 8.3 Once approved by KCC, the RAPK will form the basis of the County Council's formal submission to the DfT for the renewal of the franchise for the south-east London and Kent passenger rail service from April 2014.
- 8.4 KCC welcomes the interest and participation of the RUGs and interested individuals, and a summary of their contributions to date is at Appendix 3. While the majority of the recommendations from the RUGs and individuals have been incorporated in the proposals contained in the RAPK, it has not been possible to incorporate all of them. KCC is concerned to ensure that our proposals for the new franchise are deliverable and achievable, and inevitably some aspirations cannot be included.
- 8.5 The DfT's consultation process is expected to begin in 2011 or 2012, and so KCC's RAPK is appropriately timed to ensure our participation in that process. There will be much further stakeholder and public engagement by the DfT between then and the announcement of the new franchisee, which can be expected at some time in the latter half of 2013.
- 8.6 Whichever company or consortium is successful in their bid for the new IKF, KCC will work closely with them in the period between the announcement of their bid and the commencement of their new franchise operation on 1 April 2014.
- 8.7 KCC also intends to continue close collaboration with NR, who have already engaged positively with plans for investment and route enhancements and whose CP5 also commences in 2014. The desire of KCC to work closely with both NR and Southeastern Railway is being reciprocated and we welcome this ongoing stakeholder engagement.



9. INTERNATIONAL RAIL SERVICES

- 9.1 KCC intends to continue to work with other stakeholders to ensure that Kent remains well connected by rail with Europe. There are four principal ways in which Kent has the potential to be connected by rail with mainland Europe, and KCC will continue to be committed to their development for the benefit of all the residents of Kent.

Eurostar

- 9.2 First, Eurostar commenced services between London, Paris and Brussels in November 1994, and these trains started to serve Ashford International when it opened in 1996. The service from Ashford was initially excellent, with several trains each day to both Paris and Brussels. However, when Ebbsfleet International opened in 2006, the service was drastically reduced, to just three trains each day to and from Paris and none at all to and from Brussels. Following a campaign involving KCC, Ashford BC, Shepway DC and local MPs, and also due to an increase in passenger numbers between London and Brussels, Eurostar reintroduced one daily through service between London, Ashford and Brussels in 2009. KCC will continue to lobby for the retention and expansion of Eurostar services from Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International, including the now planned through services to Amsterdam in 2014 with the possibility of Geneva in future years.

Deutsche Bahn

- 9.3 Second, following the introduction of competition on High Speed 1 by the EU in 2010, Deutsche Bahn (DB) has indicated its willingness to operate a through service between Frankfurt, Cologne, Brussels and London, with a portion from Rotterdam and Amsterdam joining at Brussels. A test train was operated through to London St Pancras in October 2010 and the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority appears to have viewed the test favourably. If authority is given for DB to operate a through service from Germany it could commence in 2013. KCC will lobby for this service to stop at one of the county's international stations, preferably Ashford International as it is the only one fully connected to the domestic rail network in the county.

Trans-Manche Metro

- 9.4 Third, KCC will continue to participate in the project known as Trans-Manche Metro (TMM) in partnership with Conseil Regional Nord-Pas de Calais. This project is part of the wider EU funded Interreg IV North West Europe – Regions of Connected Knowledge (ROCK) project, in which KCC has replaced the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) in the work formally undertaken by that body. KCC is committed to part fund the development of the business case for TMM, together with partners in Nord-Pas de Calais and with EU Interreg IV funding. The concept of TMM is to link together the regions of Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais by providing

a regular through rail service that would start at London St Pancras and serve Ebbsfleet, Ashford, Calais Frethun, Lille and Brussels. This would facilitate regular movement of passengers for business, education, employment and leisure purposes, and would offer new opportunities to a wide range of Kent business and educational institutes which would be able to develop EU connections served by a frequent international rail service.

Eurotunnel

- 9.5 Fourth, Eurotunnel plc will continue to provide their very successful cross-Channel car, coach and freight carrying shuttle train service between Folkestone and Calais. The company has recently broken its own records of the number of passengers and vehicles carried, and provides an essential part of the total rail service between Kent and the European mainland.
- 9.6 The international dimension of Kent's rail services is paramount to the future economic and demographic development of the county. Reliable rail links to and from our European mainland neighbours will provide the necessary increase in business, education, employment and leisure opportunities that KCC wants to see for the people of Kent, and we intend to ensure that KCC is at the forefront of all these international rail developments by securing the best deal for Kent.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The renewal of the Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) in 2014 will be a pivotal moment in the provision of rail services in Kent. KCC intends to be at the forefront of the DfT's stakeholder engagement process to ensure that Kent is offered the best possible rail service beyond 2014 within the budgetary and physical constraints available.

10.2 This Rail Action Plan for Kent (RAPK) will form the basis of KCC's response to the DfT's consultation on the new IKF, and we shall consult with our own stakeholders and RUGs to ensure that as wide a range of opinion as possible will contribute to the final presentation of Kent's case for the future of rail in the county.

10.3 The following recommendations are therefore made to the KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste:

- (i) To accept the Rail Action Plan for Kent as the basis for KCC's participation in the DfT's consultation process for the new IKF;
 - (ii) To consult widely with MPs, KCC Members, District Councils, neighbouring councils, RUGs and interested individuals so as to ensure as wide a range as possible of stakeholder engagement within Kent;
 - (iii) To present this final draft version of the RAPK to the KCC Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Environment, Highways & Waste on 18 January 2011, and the final version to KCC Cabinet for approval on 4 April 2011;
 - (iv) To present the approved version of RAPK to the third Rail Summit on 19 April 2011;
 - (v) To present the approved RAPK to the DfT as the basis of KCC's contribution to the stakeholder consultation process on the new IKF;
 - (vi) To ensure that KCC's interests are fully represented in the final franchise service level specification for the new IKF;
 - (vii) To engage with the chosen operator of the IKF well before commencement of the new franchise on 1 April 2014.
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SOURCES - in chronological order

Integrated Kent Franchise – Stakeholder Briefing Document (Strategic Rail Authority, London, January 2005)

Memorandum of Understanding regarding the setting up of a European Network of High Speed Regions (Kent County Council, Region Nord-Pas de Calais, Gemeente Breda, BrabantStad - Brussels, February 2009)

Connecting Local Communities – Network Rail CP4 Delivery Plan: Route Plans 2009 – Route 1: Kent (Network Rail, London, March 2009)

The Modern Railway – A Special Modern Railways Publication (Ian Allan Publishing Ltd, Hersham, Surrey, 2009)

Unlocking Kent's Potential: Opportunities and Challenges (Kent County Council, Maidstone, 2009)

Kent Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) (Network Rail, London, January 2010)

21st Century Kent – A Blueprint for the County's Future (Sir Terry Farrell, London, January 2010)

Ashford to Ramsgate journey time enhancements – GRIP 1 stage (Network Rail, London, May 2010)

Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016 – Draft for Consultation (Kent County Council, September 2010)

Kent Rail Summits – Representations received before, during and after (KCC, Maidstone, March 2010 and October 2010)

Growth Without Gridlock – An Integrated Transport Strategy for Kent (Kent County Council, Maidstone, December 2010)

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Draft reply to the Consultation on Rail Action Plan for Kent

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council welcomes the Rail Action Plan for Kent and wishes to support this document, subject to some additional comments.

The Rail Forum staged by the County Council last November was excellent and it put the rail industry, the train operating company, Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) on notice that the County Council, the District Councils and Parish Councils of Kent together with the many rail user groups were all deeply serious and motivated about the next franchise.

Between then and now we have had the swingeing increases in fares and the poor performance of Southeastern Railway over the winter period to further reinforce everyone's intention that next time it will be better and that there will be a sharper focus on the emerging specification for the next franchise and a closer scrutiny of the commissioning process.

The draft Plan is admirably comprehensive and pays good attention to the needs of rail passengers in West Kent. The key issues that concern us are well covered. Services on the West Malling/Maidstone line are highlighted. The importance of fares, timetables and service performance are well to the fore.

The following comments are not a criticism; just a pointer to what we believe will make the coverage of the document that bit more complete as far as the needs of this area are concerned.

- The mention of high speed services on the Medway Valley line is welcome. We should include the need for a stop within this Borough.
- West Kent services are already over-crowded in the peak and we should be seeking specific measures to deal with this as it can only deteriorate over the period of the next franchise.
- We fully support the ambition of a direct service to Gatwick from wider Kent. What we should really be pushing for is the reinstatement of the Surrey part of the line into the Kent Integrated Franchise area. Without this, we fear that the importance of this line for Kent and the potential for securing the direct link and enhancing services will be prejudiced.
- Service speeds on the mid Kent line are mentioned but we feel this needs even more emphasis. It cannot be right that journey times on this line into London, and a part of London that most people do not want to go to, are slower than they were over half a century ago.
- Station improvement and station parking are also mentioned but, again, these could have far greater emphasis. In particular, the parking, if just left to chance as it currently seems to be, will result in more situations similar to what we now are

experiencing around Hildenborough station; extensive lengths of country lane obstructed by all day commuter parking to the detriment of the access and safety local community.

In summary, it is a fine document and it signals a worthy intention by the County Council to coordinate the ambitions of all interested parties in Kent for a better railway service under the next franchise. This Borough is keen to support that collective effort and contribute to it.