
Tonbridge Station Transport Interchange Improvements

To: Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board, 12th March 2018

By: Tim Read – Head of Transportation, KCC

Classification: Unrestricted

Following the public consultation for 'Improving Access to Tonbridge Station' - this report outlines the key findings from the consultation report.

A recommendation is sought as to best layout to take forward through to detailed design.

1. Introduction

Funding of £500,000 has been allocated from the West Kent Local Growth Fund (LGF) to improve the Transport Interchange at Tonbridge Station. The aim is to improve interaction between users at the station, provide more space for pedestrian movements and to create an interchange suitable for one of the busiest stations outside of London.

The funding has to be spent during 2018 / 19.

At the end of 2016 KCC consulted on a proposed scheme. Responding to the consultation feedback KCC and partners went out for a second consultation in early 2018.

The results have been collated and presented in a consultation report, included as an appendix to this report and published on www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation

2. Forecasting Traffic Flow

Congestion in the South East is forecast to rise by between 8 and 17% in the next 20 years.

Currently, in the evening peak the section of Quarry Hill Road from the station to the roundabout at Vale Road is running at over 92% capacity.

To combat roads becoming blocked in the future, local authorities need to encourage walking, cycling and bus use where possible while balancing the needs of car drivers.

Traffic modelling exercises show that the proposed scheme will not necessarily improve traffic flows during peak periods. However, they should not noticeably worsen them.

This modelling does not take account of the wider benefits to other road users, particularly buses and pedestrians. Furthermore, some of the existing road arms are projected to be running at over 100% capacity by 2029 with no intervention, leading to junctions becoming blocked.

3. Consultation

The 2018 consultation ran for 4 weeks from **16 January to 12 February 2018**

The responses have been gathered and a consultation report produced. It has been published and a copy presented alongside this report.

Two questions were asked regarding the proposed design:

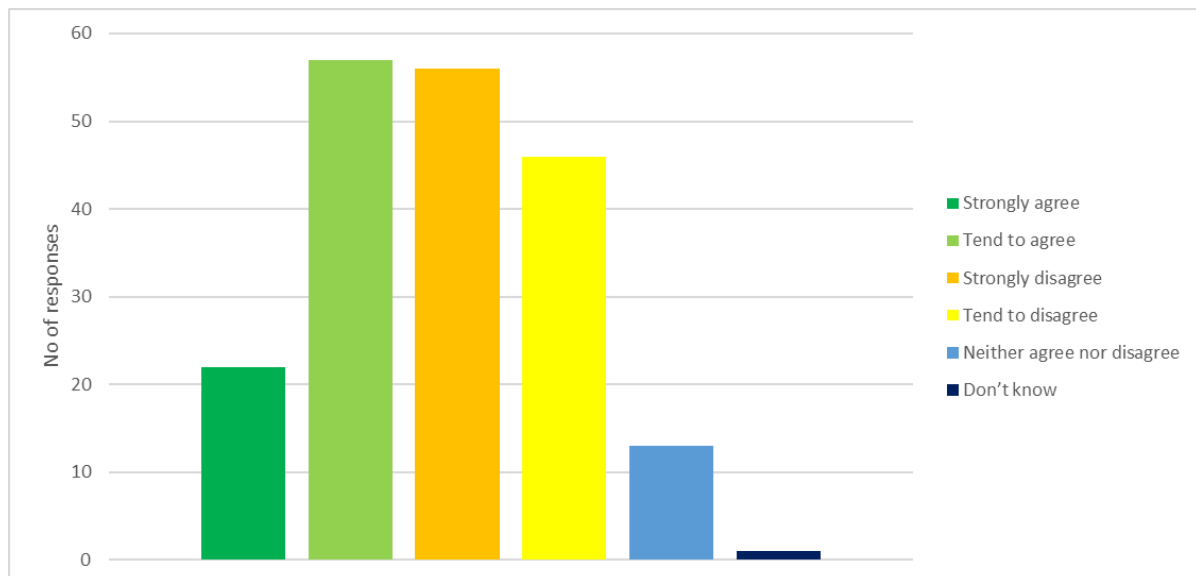
3.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the scheme design?

There were 195 responses to this question

40% of respondents agreed

53% of respondents disagreed

8% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree



Comments were taken from the questionnaire, online forum and as comments marked on plans at the exhibition event. Any theme that received 3 or fewer comments are omitted.

Theme of comments	Number of comments
Unhappy with congestion in the high street	52
Priory Road drop off would be too far away from station	45
The scheme will cause congestion	34
The scheme benefits pedestrians	34
A drop off zone for elderly / disabled is required close to the station	21
Rail replacement buses need sorting	21
Car drivers will abuse bus stop if drop off bays are further away	20
Reduce taxi rank spaces and make use of the space for drop off bays	16
Move bus standing away from the bus stop near Lidl	12
Would like to see more provision for cyclists	10
Move the taxi ranks elsewhere and use the space for buses/drop off	9
Liked the diagonal crossing as proposed in the 1st consultation	9
Railway approach shops should be removed for use as drop off spaces / bus stops	9
Splitting bus stops will confuse passengers	8
There should be two buses outside station	8
Make better use of Barden Road for drop off / taxi's	8
Disagree with banning right turn into Priory Road	8
Need to stop rat running in St Stephens and other side streets	7
Use station car park for buses / drop off	6
Don't want traffic signals on Waterloo Road	6
Must coordinate new traffic signals to optimise vehicle and pedestrian flows	6
Widen East side of Railway approach	5
Make Waterloo Road one - way	4
Signals on Priory Road	4
Remove drop off bays as plan shows from front of station	4
Enforcement at bus stops required	4

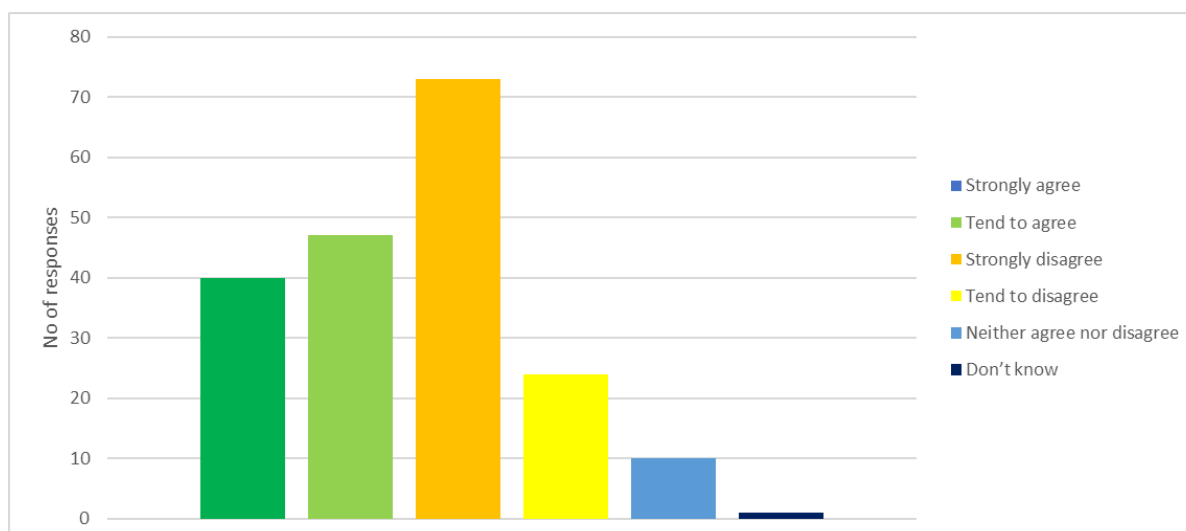
4.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase pedestrian space directly outside the main station entrance by relocating the short stay drop off spaces to Priory Road?

There were 195 responses to this question

45% of respondents agreed

49% of respondents disagreed

6% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree



Theme of comments	Number of comments
A drop off zone for elderly / disabled / children is required close to the station	35
Priory Road drop off would be too far away from station	30
Car drivers will abuse bus stop if drop off bays are further away	22
Increasing pedestrian space is a good idea, but not in total agreement with the plan	21
In support of the plan	19
Drop off spaces insufficient for the requirement	18
Will cause congestion	12
Should not have buses stopping outside the station	10
Would need enforcement from TMBC	10
Would be too much traffic on the roads leading to the drop off and Priory Road	8
The no right turn makes drop off difficult to access / people will not adhere to it	8
Use some of the Waterloo Road space currently used by taxis	7
There wouldn't be a problem if children didn't gather near the station	6
Remove bus stop, not drop off space	5
Needs drop off to rear of station at Barden Road (and an entrance extension)	5

Assessment of the consultation feedback has shown that many aspects of the scheme being proposed are supported and there are many suggestions that KCC will explore during detailed design. Generally, feedback showed that responders felt the scheme would improve the situation for pedestrians and bus/train users.

However, there were key aspects of the proposal that were not overwhelmingly supported. Proposals where responders felt congestion for car users may be increased gained far less support. Negative feeling towards congestion in the high street was often mentioned.

The proposal to move the short stay drop off spaces away from the front entrance to the station to provide room for a bus stop was not popular. Reasons included general accessibility, perceived increases in traffic flow and difficulty for those with limited mobility.

Note: There is currently provision for those with limited mobility to park and access the station from the Barden Road entrance, but this is not well advertised and is less well used than the short stay at the front of the station.

The previous proposal which was consulted on in 2016 retained the short stay drop off in its current location. Although it gained support, the consultation feedback gained 40 comments of concern that traffic flow may be affected if all the buses are located near Lidl. Officer assessment and consultation with the bus companies has shown that at peak times there can often be more than 3 buses at a time.

Therefore there is a possibility that a ‘pinch point’ may be created near the improved bus stop which may cause congestion at peak times onto the Pembury roundabout. It is expected that this would happen primarily in the evening peak. It is primarily for this reason that the design was revised to move the short stay drop off in place of an additional bus stop.

4. Recommendation required:

To recommend:

- a) move the short stay drop off spaces from the front of the station to another location to make room for an additional bus stop

or

- b) retain the short stay drop off spaces outside the front of the station with no room for a further bus stop

Future Meeting if applicable:	Progress reports will be presented to the JTB in the future.
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