

Select Committee on Future Passenger Rail Services in Kent

October 2008



Contents

1	Introduction	1.1
1.1	Introduction	1.1
1.2	Background	1.1
1.3	The Select Committee	1.1
2	Rail in Kent	2.1
2.1	Introduction	2.1
2.2	Services	2.1
2.3	Fares and Ticketing	2.11
2.4	Trains	2.15
2.5	Stations	2.16
2.6	Regeneration and Development	2.18
2.7	Marketing	2.22
3	Stakeholders	3.1
3.1	Introduction	3.1
3.2	Key Stakeholders	3.1
4	Recommendations	4.1

Appendices

Appendix A – Network Rail Improvements

Appendix B – National Stations Improvements Programme

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In December 2009 High Speed domestic services will start operating in the County of Kent (including stations within the Medway Council area). The services will use the new High Speed line (HS1) which links the Channel Tunnel with London St Pancras. The new services will result in a significant change in how people use rail in Kent and also alter the image of Kent itself. To maximise the opportunities offered by the new service Kent County Council has been undertaking significant stakeholder consultation. As part of this consultation, the council held a Select Committee on future passenger rail services in Kent. This report is a summary of the key findings and recommendations.

1.1.2 This section describes the background and aims of the Select Committee and provides details on the members of the Select Committee, the witnesses and written representations.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The aim of the Select Committee was to identify the best rail passenger services for Kent, both in terms of:

- The immediate benefits of the solution in terms of journey times and improved services to London and around Kent
- The long term benefits of the solution in terms of the regeneration of Kent and the impacts on the wider rail network and transport in the County.

1.3 The Select Committee

Kent County Council Members

- Susan Carey (Con) – Chairman
- Alan Chell (Con)
- Charles Hibberd (Con)
- Richard Parry (Con)
- Elizabeth Tweed (Con)
- Terry Birkett (Lab)
- Ray Parker (Lab)
- Dan Daley (LD)

Medway Council Member

- Ken Bamber (Con)

Witnesses at Select Committee

- Vince Lucas (Commercial Director Southeastern)

- Tunde Olatunji (Passenger Link Manager, Passenger Focus)
- Ben Craig (Senior Route Planner, Network Rail)
- Stephen Gasche (Public Transport Team leader, Kent County Council)
- Mandy Bearne (Marketing and Research Director, Locate in Kent)
- Mick Sutch (Head of Planning & Transport Strategy, Kent County Council)
- Peter Riley (Senior Estates manager, Mouchels)
- Fran Warrington (Head of Tourism, Visit Kent) and Sandra Matthews-Marsh (CEO, Visit Kent)
- Jeremy Cooper (Commercial Director, Stagecoach)

Meeting with Mick Sutch

John MacQuarrie (Department for Transport (DfT) Franchise Manager), Joe Kerrigan (DfT Contract Manager) and Phil Barnett (DfT Project Sponsor CTRL)

Written Representations

- Ashford Borough Council
- Canterbury City Council
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Sevenoaks District Council
- Swale Borough Council
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
- London & Continental Railways
- London Ashford (Lydd) Airport
- Kent International (Manston) Airport
- Arriva Bus
- Highway Agency
- Dover Pride
- Kent County Council Environment and Regeneration
- University of Kent
- Pfizer Global Research and Development
- Hirst Commercial
- Hobbs Parker Estate Agents
- Cluttons Commercial and Residential
- Kent Economic Board
- Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association
- Ashford Transport Forum

- Howard Stoate MP (Dartford)
- Stephen Ladyman MP (South Thanet)
- Julian Brazier MP (Canterbury)
- Roger Gale MP (North Thanet)
- Jonathan Shaw MP (Chatham and Aylesford and Minister for the South East)

2 Rail in Kent

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section describes the key discussion points and issues raised during the course of the Select Committee. Discussion is split into the following themes:

- services
- fares and ticketing
- trains
- stations
- regeneration and development
- marketing

2.2 Services

2.2.1 The Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) was completed in November 2007. The County Council has supported the concept of the CTRL since the early stages of its development and was the lead supporter of the scheme through the Parliamentary processes. Apart from the catalytic effect the stations at Ashford and Ebbsfleet will have on development of the two Growth Areas, the key benefit to Kent is the introduction of high speed domestic services from December 2009. Some £5.8bn has been invested in building the Rail Link, constructing the new High Speed domestic trains, upgrading the power supply and building a new train depot in Ashford and improving the existing depot in Ramsgate. The CTRL has been deemed a success and there is now impetus to extend the high speed rail network beyond London and link with Heathrow and cities in the north of the country.

2.2.2 The new domestic services will use the CTRL (now designated High Speed line 1 (HS1) which links the Channel Tunnel with London St Pancras. This will result in a significant change in how people use rail in Kent and also alter the image of Kent itself. As a result of the introduction of High Speed services there will be other significant changes to services and the timetable across the County.

2.2.3 Key to future changes in rail services in Kent is the Kent Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS). Which will identify how best to make use of rail capacity and identify priorities for investment in new capacity. The RUS will seek to balance capacity, passenger & freight demand, operational performance and cost, and to address the requirements of funders and stakeholders. The draft Kent RUS will be put out to stakeholders for consultation in Winter 2008/09 with the final RUS being issued in Summer 2009.

2.2.4 At this stage, the Department for Transport was unable to say definitely whether the Integrated Kent Franchise would remain integrated at the next round of franchising or whether there would be separate franchises for the High Speed and 'classic' services. However, in view of the history and nature of HS1 the department felt a split was a less likely possibility.

High Speed Services

- 2.2.5 The initial specification of High Speed services was much more limited than the currently envisaged service. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) issued their Consultation Document on new passenger services using the High Speed line (then referred to as Channel Tunnel Rail Link or CTRL) in February 2003. The core option then comprised:
- 4 peak trains London St Pancras – Gravesend;
 - 2 peak trains London St Pancras – Canterbury West (via Ashford);
 - 2 peak trains London St Pancras – Folkestone Central (via Ashford); and
 - off peak frequency at broadly half that of the peak.
- 2.2.6 Following stakeholder consultation including Kent County Council, Medway Council and district councils, it was decided to extend service provision to the Medway Towns, East Kent and Dover. The primary reasons were to serve development and regeneration proposals within the Medway Towns and to stimulate regeneration in the deprived coastal towns.
- 2.2.7 Figure 2.1 shows the stations which will be served by the new High Speed services from December 2009, and the expected time savings for journeys to and from London compared to existing services. This illustrates the significant savings especially from Ebbsfleet, Gravesend, Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Dover and Thanet. Figure 2.2 also illustrates the effects of HS services showing isochrones before and after December 2009.
- 2.2.8 During the off peak four trains will run every hour:
- **Two trains an hour to North Kent** calling at Stratford, Ebbsfleet, Gravesend, Medway Towns (Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham), Sittingbourne and Faversham
 - **Two trains an hour to East Kent**, one calling at Stratford, Ebbsfleet, Ashford, Canterbury West, Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate, the other calling at Stratford, Ebbsfleet, Ashford, Folkestone West, Folkestone Central and Dover.
- 2.2.9 During the two peak periods the calling pattern has yet to be confirmed, but could be
- two trains an hour to just Ebbsfleet via Stratford
 - one train per hour trains to Rochester via Stratford, Gravesend and Strood
 - one train per hour to Broadstairs calling at Stratford, Ebbsfleet, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Sittingbourne, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Birchington-on-sea and Margate
 - two trains an hour to Dover/Margate calling at Ebbsfleet and Ashford where the train divides, one portion calling at Canterbury West, Ramsgate and Broadstairs, the other portion calling at Folkestone West, Folkestone Central and Dover Priory
- 2.2.10 Overall, there was a general satisfaction in the expected service provision of High Speed with particular praise for the extension of High Speed services to Dover and Thanet. However, there were still a number of concerns particularly with regards to the lack of interchange at Stratford and the location of the terminus station at St Pancras (see 2.2.20).

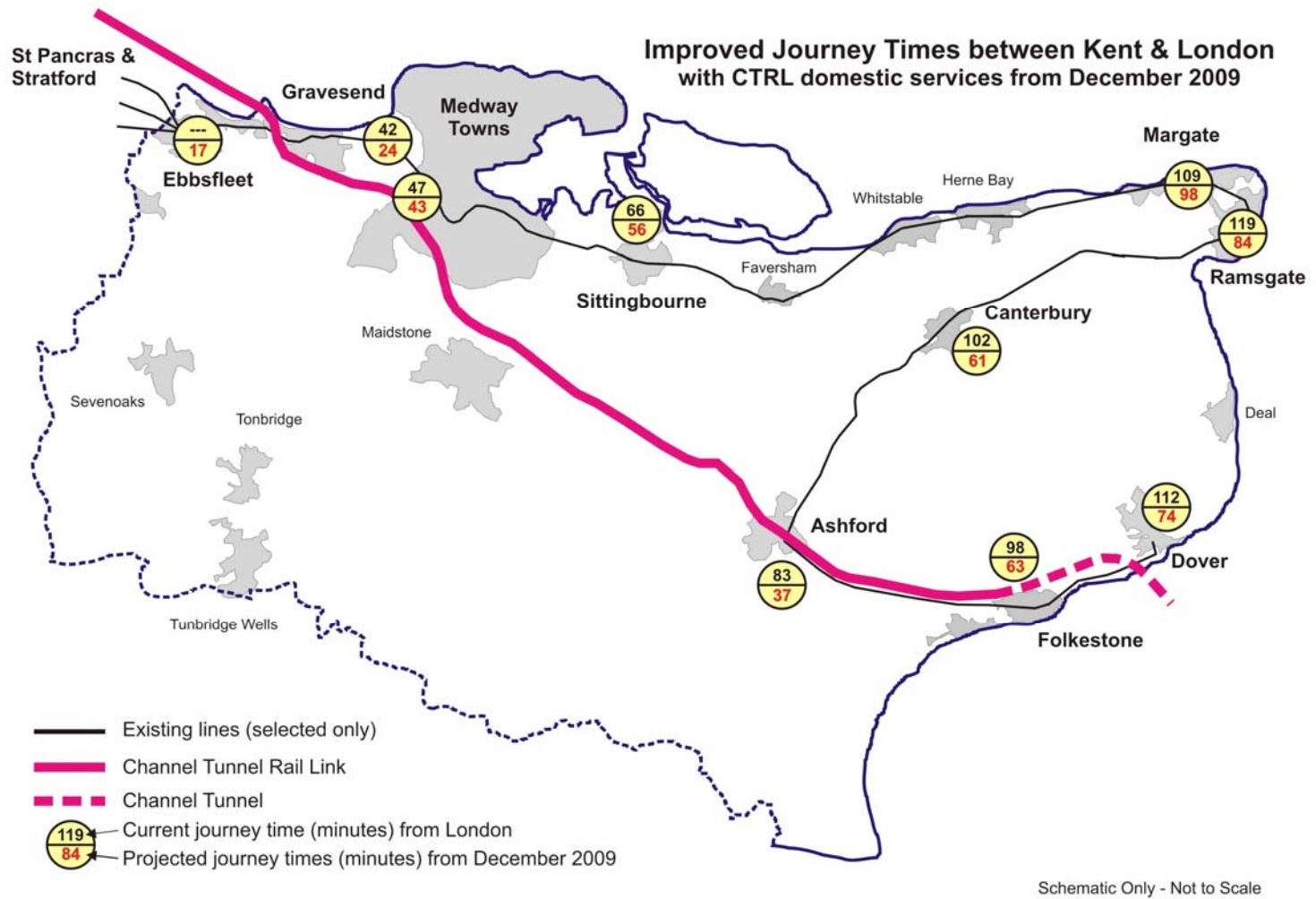


Figure 2.1 High Speed Services and Journey Time Savings

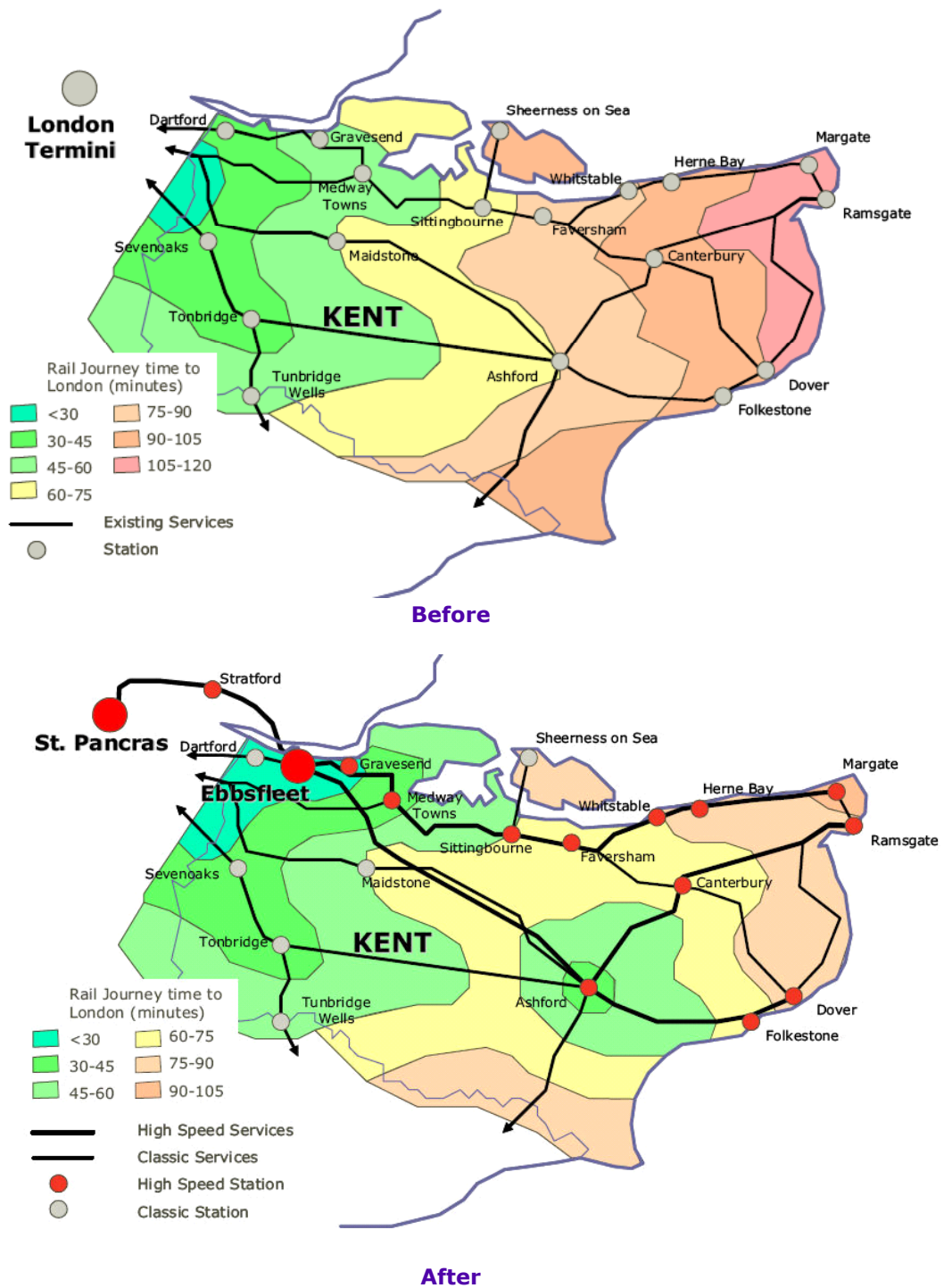


Figure 2.2 Isochrones for Before and After HS Services Introduced

- 2.2.11 Stratford International Station, at which the High Speed domestic and Eurostar services will stop, is 400m from the Regional station with interchange between local services, the Underground and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and the area is undergoing significant construction as a result of the staging of the Olympic Games in 2012. Until the interchange between the two stations is improved, the lack of dedicated facilities will be a serious barrier to use for Docklands-related High Speed passengers.
- 2.2.12 The location and perceived inconvenience of St Pancras was an issue that was raised by several witnesses. Southeastern stressed it was not their decision to go to St Pancras and it was something they had to accommodate. The prime concerns over St Pancras relate to its

distance from the City and likely overcrowding on the underground network. This is combined with a premium fare for High Speed services and many commuters would have to purchase a Travelcard to continue their journey, further increasing costs. There was also concern over potential parking costs at Ebbsfleet Station which will be controlled by the land owners, Land Securities. Current charges for parking at Ebbsfleet for Eurostar services is £11.50 per day.

2.2.13 Figure 2.3 illustrates overall journey time savings by HS services from Kent stations to destinations in London

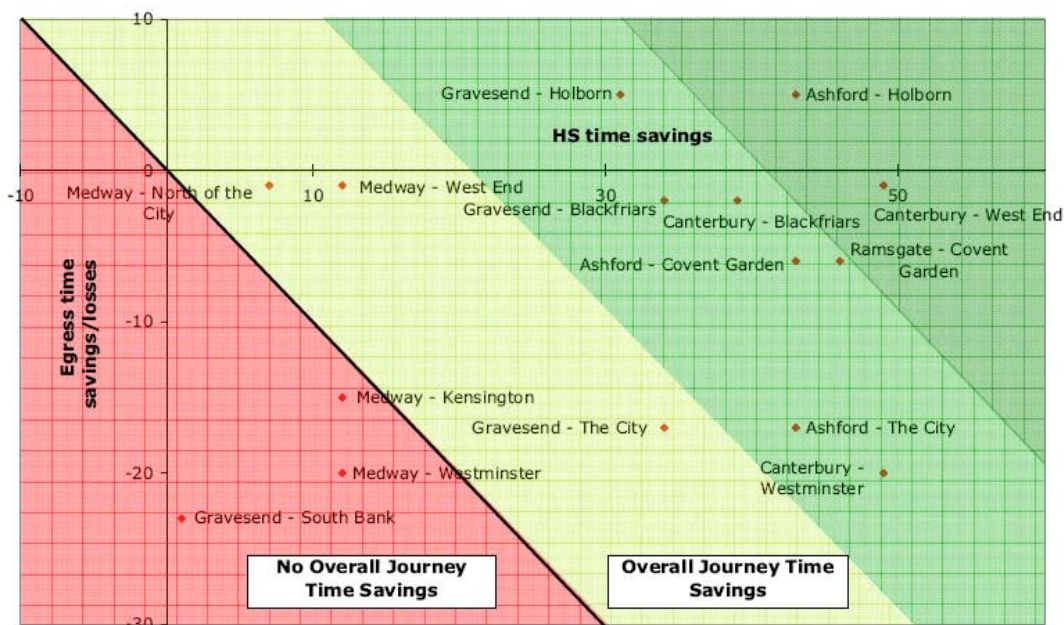


Figure 2.3 Overall Journey Time Savings by HS Services

2.2.14 The new developments in the Kings Cross area will make St Pancras a destination in its own right over time and its interchange with six underground lines will suit many travellers. St Pancras will also provide better rail connections between Kent and the Midlands, North and Scotland with direct connections to the East Coast and Midland Main lines and proximity to Euston and the West Coast Main Line.

2.2.15 Some queries related to the method used in forecasting future demand. The key concern was the use of zones to model patronage uplift, rather than examining stations individually. Southeastern described the methodology which consisted of using housing development data, population growth figures combined with market research including both non-user and rail user surveys. Zones were defined to cover areas with similar journey times and frequencies, with the uplift in demand being calculated on the basis of the improvement to these variables. The sensitivity of passengers to these improvements is based on data obtained from web based SP Stated Preference surveys.

2.2.16 According to the latest modelling work on crowding, Southeastern expect there to be some standing between Ebbsfleet and London particularly if the Stratford to St Pancras link is deemed attractive. It is likely there will be seats available from Folkestone and Canterbury but there is an outside possibility of standing from Ashford. Figure 2.4 shows the levels of existing crowding in the morning peak period on selected routes and HS1 will help to relieve some of the existing routes as they bypass key bottlenecks of the London Bridge area and Lewisham and Figure 2.5 shows the expected growth of all domestic rail demand (HS and classic combined) from the HS stations.

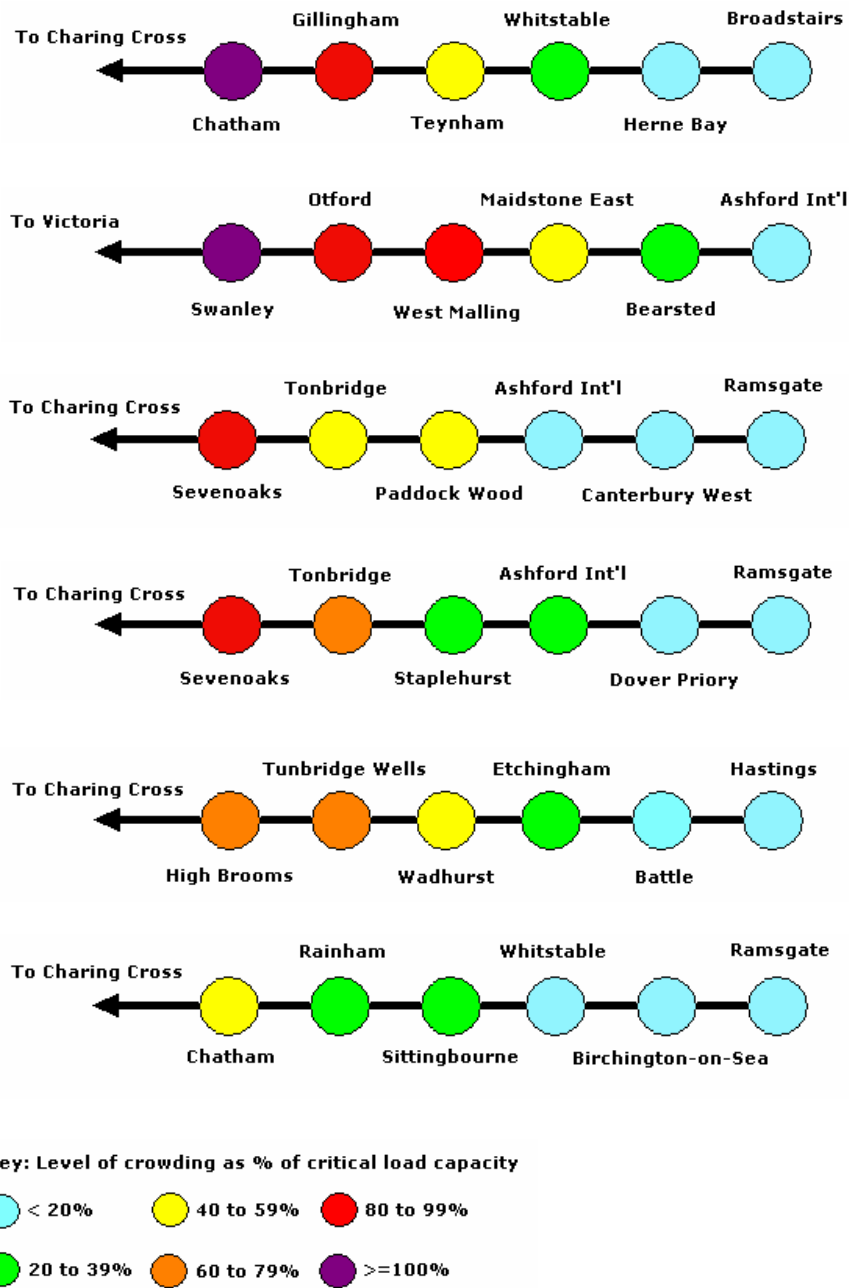


Figure 2.4 Levels of crowding on existing services in morning peak period on selected routes

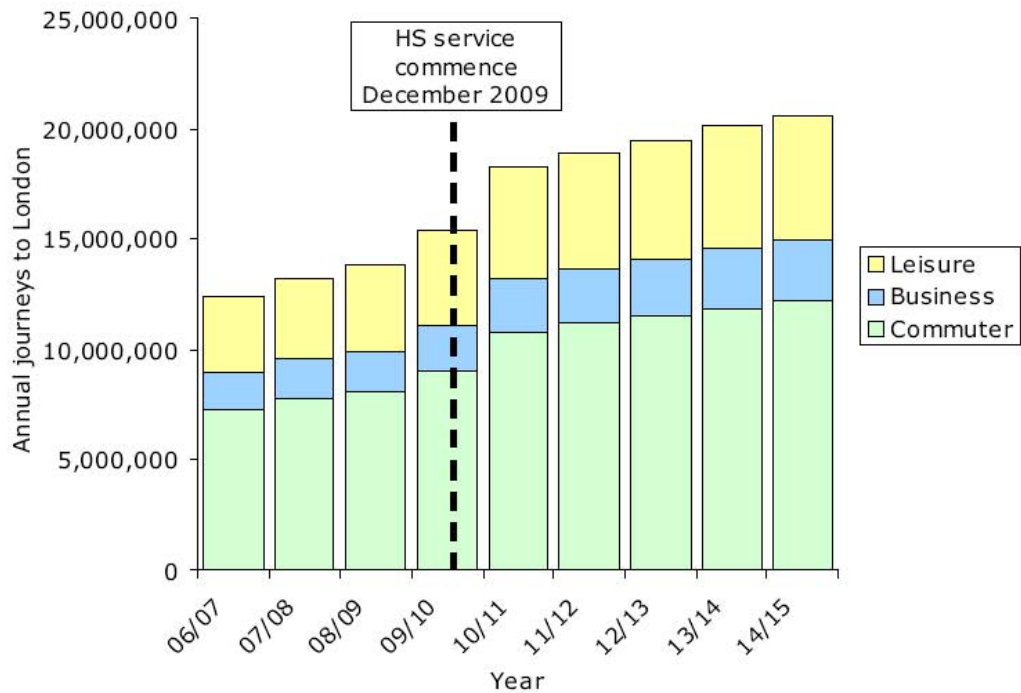


Figure 2.5 Growth of total annual journeys from Kent High Speed Stations 2006/7 to 2014/15

- 2.2.17 Southeastern note that the current access to train paths on HS1 is sufficient and they also do not foresee requiring any additional access to HS1 until 2014 at the earliest.
- 2.2.18 Importantly, Southeastern are confident that High Speed will be successful, certainly in the long term, although it may take several years to reach its potential. Communities grow organically around stations, but it is up to the individual towns and other stakeholders to seize the opportunity that is available to them. Southeastern stressed that “we should be thinking positively rather than talking it down”.

Non-High Speed services

- 2.2.19 Non-High Speed services are split into Metro and Mainline. Metro services cover routes within London and as far as Sevenoaks and Gillingham. Mainline services are the routes to Hastings via Tonbridge, Folkestone/Dover and Ramsgate/Margate.
- 2.2.20 To meet growth targets, Southeastern stress that they have to encourage substantial growth of existing services. Southeastern emphasise that in order to meet the target of a 24% growth in passengers by 2014, the Non-High Speed services need to grow more than the total number of people using the High Speed services. Figure 2.6 shows the high amount of traffic generated by the High Speed services, but also shows the contribution classic services to London makes even from the stations served by the HS services

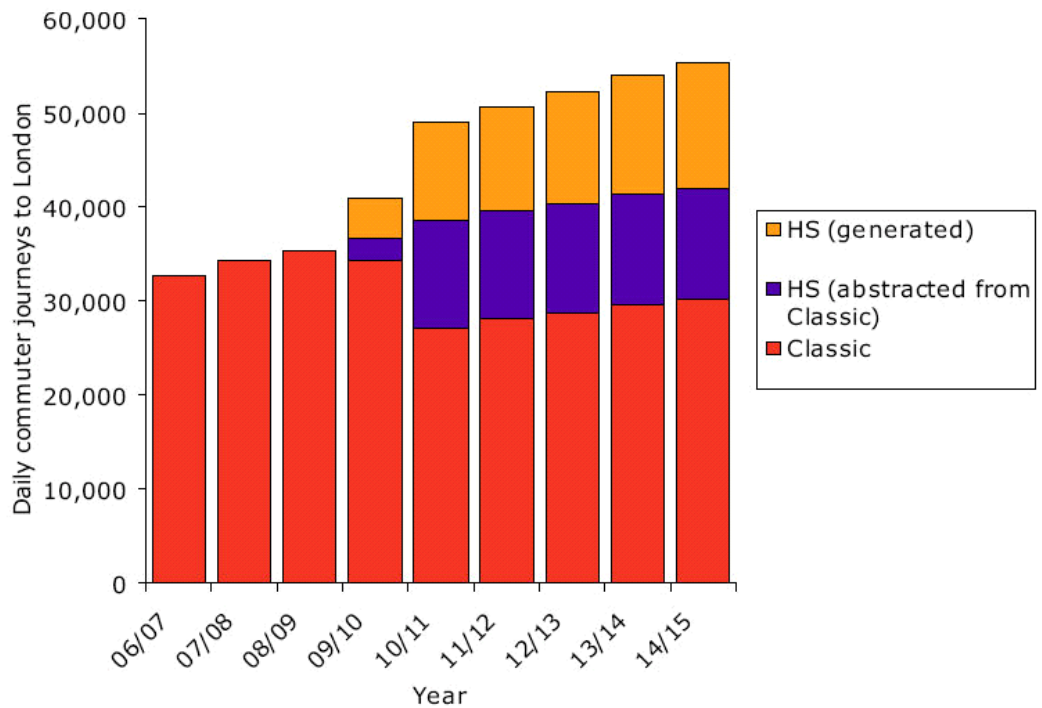


Figure 2.6 Daily commuter journeys from Kent High Speed Stations to London 2006/7 to 2014/15

2.2.21 The new timetable will ensure connectivity between Non-High Speed and High Speed services particularly at:

- Ashford – for other mainline services
- Faversham – for east Kent
- Strood – to and from Maidstone

In addition, it is hoped that there will be a high-standard and direct pedestrian link built between Ebbsfleet and Northfleet Stations and £5m of Community Infrastructure Funding has been allocated to this scheme.

2.2.22 The number of trains operating into Victoria, Charing Cross and Cannon Street in the peaks will be maintained at broadly the current levels and this is a significant improvement over the Strategic Rail Authority’s (SRA’s) specification in 2003. However, there are concerns that overcrowding will occur on some Non-High Speed services particularly in the period before people change their travel patterns.

2.2.23 An improvement to existing service levels from December 2009 will be an additional two trains per hour from Tunbridge Wells to London, also benefiting Sevenoaks. Specific changes from the 2003 specification are:

- restoration of two fast trains per hour from Victoria to Ramsgate and Dover (dividing at Faversham) which will also provide Longfield and Meopham an additional hourly service (from two to three per hour). However this does slow down trains from the Medway Towns and from East Kent ; and
- an hourly mainline service via Canterbury West will maintain a service to the local stations while allowing the High Speed service to run between Ramsgate and Ashford with only one stop, at Canterbury West. Originally the proposal was for no off-peak services at some stations on this line.

- 2.2.24 There were some concerns over the reduction in off-peak service, particularly the Cannon Street service from Maidstone East. Southeastern contend that this service is under-used but Maidstone Borough, Tonbridge and Malling Borough and Kent County Councils counter that large scale developments on or near to the route necessitate a frequent, fast and direct off-peak service to the City. Another major concern is the reduction of off-peak services between Ashford and Tonbridge
- 2.2.25 The Dartford-Gravesend section of the North Kent Line is the worst performing part of the network in Kent. It is a long section of two-track railway with significant freight movement. Southeastern are looking at a new timetable to reduce risk of disruption.
- 2.2.26 Another potential area for improvement is the Medway Valley Line that runs between Strood and Paddock Wood, via Maidstone. There were some calls for this line to be used to link Maidstone directly with Ebbsfleet, but timetable constraints related to London Bridge (the worst bottleneck on the Southeastern network which dictates the timings of trains throughout the Southeastern network) and the fact Strood is the only point with a turnaround facility mean this is not feasible in the short term. However, Southeastern are restructuring the Medway Valley service to ensure good connections are made at Strood with the High Speed services and increase services to run throughout the day.
- 2.2.27 A further concern is over the potential reduction in services to smaller stations, such as Sturry and Chartham. Off-peak services are already limited but Southeastern are introducing a new hourly service calling at all stations on this route. There was a consensus from Districts and MPs that service reductions at smaller stations should be minimised, although there is recognition that to improve journey times between towns in Kent and between Kentish towns and London, compromises have to be made
- 2.2.28 Overall, Visit Kent considers that the new High Speed domestic services represent a huge opportunity for Kent to increase tourism in Kent. They consider that a greater frequency of services on existing lines would be desirable in some cases, but acknowledge that, in general, leisure customers are in not so much of a hurry as commuters.

Eurostar

- 2.2.29 The Select Committee was focused on domestic services, but consideration needs to be given to the interaction with Eurostar. Eurostar services stop at both Ebbsfleet and Ashford within Kent, and exclusively use the HS1 line. Overall, since HS1 opened, Kent has more Eurostar services to Paris and Brussels, but services to and from Ashford have been reduced and currently there is no service between Ashford and Brussels. Opposition to this situation, led by Kent County and Ashford Borough Councils, has caused Eurostar to reintroduce an Ashford – Brussels service. This was to start in December 2008, but has been delayed until the Channel Tunnel is fully operational.
- 2.2.30 Encouragingly, there appears to be a close relationship between Southeastern and Eurostar with particular attention to ensuring Ebbsfleet is a success and ensuring timetables are coordinated. Already Eurostar passengers accessing services at Ebbsfleet and Ashford can travel by Southeastern services free of charge.

Thameslink

- 2.2.31 The next event that will drive further change for timetables in Kent will be the developments at London Bridge to expand the capacity available on the through lines to accommodate Thameslink Key Output Two.
- 2.2.32 This work is due to commence after the 2012 Olympics and be completed in 2015. It is expected that the opening of Phase 1 of the East London Line will divert some passengers away from London Bridge with the possibility of further diversion if Phase 2 of the East London Line (the incorporation of the South London Line into the London Overground network) is authorised.
- 2.2.33 Once the Thameslink works have been completed, there will be considerably greater capacity through London Bridge which will benefit Kent. Thameslink services would enable some destinations in Kent to access Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon, and Kings Cross stations directly as well as some stations to the north of London. The exact pattern of future services using the Thameslink core route is still under consideration, but current thinking is that Kent destinations would be Sevenoaks (via Swanley), Tonbridge and Maidstone and/or the Medway Towns. The County Council will work with Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils to press the case for Maidstone to be served by Thameslink and Medway Council will seek to encourage the provision of Thameslink services to the Medway Towns.

Other Potential New Services

- 2.2.34 The Kent Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS), to be published next year, will identify gaps in service provision and recommend options how best to resolve these gaps. The consultation period in early 2009 will provide a major opportunity to influence future service provision. Additionally, the existing Integrated Kent Franchise will finish in 2014 and the Department for Transport recommends that local authorities should start to consider their aspirations for the new franchise well before the official consultation starts in 2012.
- 2.2.35 Kent has two passenger airports; Kent International located at Manston near Margate, and London Ashford located at Lydd on the Romney Marshes. Both airports plan significant expansion in the short to medium term and as such seek improved rail access.
- 2.2.36 Kent International Airport suggested that there are opportunities to enhance the rail service to the airport including improvements to the line speed between Ashford and Ramsgate and ultimately construction of a new parkway station and/or building a new rail spur into the airport adjacent to the passenger terminal. Consideration of the parkway concept is covered in section 2.5
- 2.2.37 London Ashford Airport advocated running passenger services to and from Ashford via the Marsh Line from Appledore and the Dungeness freight-only line to a new station adjacent to the airport. The airport has applied for permission to extend the runway and develop a new terminal. The initial planning application set a threshold of 250,000 passengers per year, although it is a medium term objective to increase this to 1,000,000 per year. This would make London Ashford comparable in passenger numbers to present day Exeter, Bournemouth or Doncaster-Sheffield (Robin Hood Airport). It should be pointed out that none of these airports have a dedicated railway link or railway station.
- 2.2.38 In addition, potential was highlighted in reopening the line previously used by Eurostar to that joined HS1 to the Rochester-Swanley line. The line could then form a Swanley-

Ebbsfleet-Dartford link although significant infrastructure would have to be constructed to connect this line to Ebbsfleet and HS1 and it is not certain how attractive such a service would be.

- 2.2.39 Although Gatwick is the South East's second major airport, from December 2008 there will be no direct rail services between Kent and Gatwick. Many witnesses considered that this decision should be reversed and have responded accordingly to the new South Central franchise proposals. The same franchise proposals perpetuate the reduction of services between Tonbridge and Redhill from half hourly to hourly in off peak periods which will occur from this December. The County Council, Medway Council and affected District Councils will continue to press this case when the Kent RUS is published for consultation.
- 2.2.40 There are a number of options for new or improved rail services in Kent. These options need to be rationalised and prioritised preferably before the RUS comes out for consultation.

Conclusions

- At present there is general satisfaction over the provision of High Speed domestic services, especially as services have been extended to Thanet and Dover.
- However, the provision of peak period services needs to be reviewed when further details are known.
- There is concern about some mainline services, particularly off-peak Maidstone – Cannon Street , which will be dropped from the timetable and the reduction in Ashford – Tonbridge trains in the off-peak.
- Southeastern consider that take-up of the new High Speed services will be very good on the East Kent line, although less so on the North Kent line
- There is expected to be some standing from Ebbsfleet on the new High Speed services with the outside chance of standing from Ashford
- Thameslink may offer increased opportunities to areas in Kent that are not served by High Speed services such as Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Maidstone from 2015
- The Kent RUS will be undergo consultation in early 2009 and provide an opportunity to shape future service provision
- HS1 will improve connectivity between Kent and London and destinations north of the capital.
- The Select Committee regrets that from December 2008, Kent will not have a direct rail link to Gatwick Airport and orbital services via Tonbridge and Redhill will be reduced from December 2008. It believes that a direct service between Strood (via Maidstone) and Gatwick on the Medway Valley Line should be introduced.

2.3 Fares and Ticketing

- 2.3.1 Fares are a particularly contentious issue for rail services in Kent. Under the terms of the Southeastern's franchise agreement, it is able to enact some substantial fares increases, partly to offset historically low fares across this area, and partly through being able to charge a premium for the new High Speed services.
- 2.3.2 As with all TOCs, Southeastern's fares fall into two categories: regulated and unregulated. Regulated fares cover most season tickets, day returns (up to 50 miles) and savers (over 50

Miles). These fares are generally associated with markets where there is limited price competition, such as commuting. Nationally, regulated fares increases are capped to an average of RPI+1%. However, as a special case, Southeastern is allowed to increase fares by up to RPI+3% for the first five years of the franchise (and RPI+1% thereafter). This special case has arisen because fare increases were capped due to poor performance during the Connex era.

2.3.3 Unregulated fares are not price capped, but are generally associated with markets where commercial pressure tends to control excessive price increases. This applies in particular to off-peak travel, where Southeastern have developed a number of good value products to encourage more off-peak travel.

2.3.4 General concern was expressed that large fare increases will make rail travel unaffordable for many people.

High Speed Premium Fares

2.3.5 In most countries where such services exist, high speed rail services charge a premium over 'normal' rail services. In the UK there already exists such differential pricing for competing services such as London to Birmingham or London to Peterborough. If no premium was to be charged on the High Speed services in Kent, there would be a risk that high levels of overcrowding could result.

2.3.6 Under the terms of the franchise agreement, a premium fare can be charged on a journey that operates over HS1. The maximum premium chargeable is limited as follows:

- From Ebbsfleet to London, up to 35% of the 'non-CTRL' fare from Gravesend may be charged.
- Between Gravesend and Thanet on the North Kent Line, up to 30% of the 'non-CTRL' fare from Gravesend to London (i.e. the portion of the journey on the HS1 line) can be charged as a premium
- At all other stations, the premium is limited to 20% of the 'non-CTRL' fare from Ashford to London.

2.3.7 For instance, under the current franchise agreement, an additional 30% of the Gravesend-London fare on the classic network could be added to the existing Medway Towns-London fare for travel on the High Speed service.

2.3.8 Southeastern has to maximise their income to eliminate subsidy deficit so will ensure they do not price too many people off the service.

2.3.9 The maximum premiums outlined in 2.3.6 are perceived by Southeastern as anomalous. Their market research has shown that, despite the higher premium permitted on the North Kent Line compared to stations via Ashford, there is much less willingness to pay the premium in the Medway Towns. Southeastern is therefore trying to change the fare premiums which reflect the amount of usage of HS1, journey time savings and willingness to pay. However, any changes to the premium fare envisaged in the franchise agreement would require approval from the Secretary of State.

2.3.10 If the North Kent trains are not fully used, Southeastern will have further evidence to reduce the premium, and therefore potentially requiring increased subsidy from the government; or may need to reduce the level of service. If the latter occurred, there could be a transfer of

the rolling stock released to the East Kent services via Ashford if they are over-subscribed. If demand on both routes was considerably lower than expected, Southeastern would be likely to go into Revenue Support (effectively running the franchise on a management contract) which would give the DfT a considerably higher degree of control and a stronger ability to influence fares. There is the ultimate danger that the new trains could be redeployed away from Kent as happened to the regional Eurostar train sets which were never used to link towns in the north with Paris and Brussels as intended and but have been leased to SNCF and to the East Coast Main Line service.

- 2.3.11 The premium is unlikely to be the same for peak and off-peak. Southeastern is currently exploring this and looking at how demand will change through the day. Their judgement will be based on balancing what will maximise income from the available capacity.
- 2.3.12 It has not been decided whether the premium fare will apply from the day of opening or introduced gradually later. In addition, fare levels at individual stations have not been finalised. Passenger Focus is a strong advocate of a staged increase in fare premium to help passengers build up confidence in the service. The request for lower initial fares was a common theme from many of witnesses particularly District Councils and local MPs.
- 2.3.13 Southeastern did, however, clarify that the concession for free travel on Southeastern services for Eurostar passengers travelling to and from Ebbsfleet and Ashford would continue. This concession also applies on Fastrack buses serving Ebbsfleet station.

Non High Speed Fares

- 2.3.14 There has been some presumption that the RPI +3% increase in regulated fares was due to the introduction of High Speed services. This is not the case as the increase would have occurred regardless of High Speed.
- 2.3.15 The majority of revenue comes from peak services while many off-peak trains have significant spare capacity. Passenger Focus feels there is plenty of scope in pricing policy to encourage more people to travel off peak. The key to attracting off peak use is through competitive pricing and marketing to ensure potential customers are fully informed. Off peak is also the area where Southeastern have the most commercial flexibility as these fares are not regulated. Passenger Focus describes some of Southeastern's marketing as "quite good" particularly promoting Kent as a green countryside and an interesting place to visit. To further maximise this market opportunity, Southeastern could explore the success behind South West Trains strength in both peak and off peak services. Visit Kent feels that off peak fares need to be lower to promote tourism.
- 2.3.16 Passenger Focus have been in discussion with Southeastern over a scheme whereby passengers who cannot afford to pay for a season ticket in one payment have the opportunity to pay by Direct Debit so they can also get the benefit of the reduced rate a season ticket offers. At present Southeastern has welcomed the suggestion but the idea is still being developed.
- 2.3.17 Southeastern describes the existing fares increases as right for a business that is seeing growth in passenger numbers of 6% p.a. However, Southeastern and DfT consider that Kent has received an unprecedented level of investment in its rail services recently, services have improved steadily and the service has received a large public subsidy in recent years. The CTRL cost in excess of £5bn and £600m has been spent on new rolling stock for Kent

services and £93m on power supply upgrade of the track. DfT considers that if the increases were capped at RPI + 1%, there would be fewer services.

- 2.3.18 There was concern that increases in the regulated fares last January for stations in Kent were greater than those for London stations. The DfT stated that for London it was necessary to consider the Travelcard factor and the involvement of Travel for London (TfL) and other Train Operating Companies which have services terminating in London. Depending on TfL's future policies, it was probable that London fare increase would continue at RPI +1% for the foreseeable future, further widening the disparity.
- 2.3.19 While Visit Kent would like lower off-peak fares to increase tourism to Kent, they concluded that the proposed changes from December 2009 represented a huge opportunity for them to attract visitors from north London and towns to the north of the capital.
- 2.3.20 Locate in Kent reported that they have never had any concerns from businesses citing high rail fares to and from Kent as an issue.

Ticketing

- 2.3.21 The new HS trains will terminate at St Pancras which offers opportunities for users to continue their journey by rail to the Midlands, North and beyond via Euston, St Pancras or Kings Cross stations. Southeastern is actively cooperating with other operators to promote these opportunities and explore through ticketing.
- 2.3.22 Southeastern mentioned that in the future they hope to fully utilise the electronic reservation system that is built into the seating of the HS trains.
- 2.3.23 There was some interest in promoting Open Jaw tickets which are a return ticket but allow passengers to come back, to say London, from a different station in Kent from the one they arrived at and so are of particular use to tourists visiting more than one attraction.
- 2.3.24 Another ticketing option that would be useful to tourists and should be explored would be a Kent Travel Card. A Kent Travel Card would be an intra-Kent off peak ticket but there are logistical issues to overcome, although Stagecoach would like to progress this. Visit Kent is particularly keen to market integrated ticketing by working with bus operators, taxi firms and Southeastern
- 2.3.25 Integrating rail and bus services and ticketing was a common theme raised at the Select Committee and a particular constraint was identified that many bus services linking with stations do not continue late enough to enable commuters to catch a bus as part of their return journey. PlusBus is a rail ticketing product which, for small supplementary charge on top of the normal rail fare, is valid for travel on bus networks in selected towns. All major towns in the Southeastern area currently run PlusBus schemes
- 2.3.26 Southeastern drew attention to the complex nature of rail ticketing and that fact that most bus ticket machines could not cope with this complexity. This is seen as a barrier to pursuing fully integrated ticketing.
- 2.3.27 An additional consideration is Olympic ticketing. The Olympics are less than four years away so effort needs to be made immediately to formulate a strategy on how to maximise this opportunity, particularly as Ebbsfleet will handle a large amount of Olympic traffic.

Conclusions

- the Integrated Kent Franchise agreement allows Southeastern to increase regulated fares by a larger amount than in other UK rail franchises – this is to address historically low fares in the area
- the franchise agreement also allows premium fares to be charged on the High Speed services. This practice occurs elsewhere in the UK and in on High Speed services in other countries.
- Southeastern will set fares so as to maximise their income and eliminate subsidy deficit. In particular, they do not wish to set fares too high in prices-sensitive markets and risk pricing-off too many customers.

2.4 Trains

High Speed trains

- 2.4.1 A new fleet of 29 Hitachi Class 395 trains will be used for the High Speed services. The trains can accelerate rapidly to 140 mph and the first few are currently undergoing testing, the remaining trains will be delivered in 2009.
- 2.4.2 The High Speed trains will each have an On Board Manager throughout the journey to provide customer service. The Manager will also play an important part in evacuation procedures and other security and safety aspects but Southeastern considers that the trains do not need a conductor, so there will be some changes in working practices which have caused concern with Unions.
- 2.4.3 Trains will have the same amount of space for cycles as there is currently on the Class 375s which run on the mainline services. However, as with existing Southeastern policy no bikes (except for folding bikes) will be allowed during peak hours but are allowed off-peak at no charge. The final fleet will have space and easier access to the door area to ease carrying luggage on and off trains.
- 2.4.4 The general consensus of the Select Committee who visited the train depot in Ashford is that the trains will be comfortable. Passenger Focus has been involved in the consultation on the seating and interior decor of the trains.
- 2.4.5 The DfT described what would happen if High Speed services prove so successful that a case could be made for additional rolling stock. Due to European procurement regulations it could take up to five years to get additional trains onto the network.

Non-High Speed trains

- 2.4.6 The Select Committee welcomed the investment in railways in Kent, particularly the replacement of rolling stock. Southeastern has one of the youngest rolling stock fleets in the country and the mainline class 375s, although only six years old, are already due to be refurbished imminently including replacement seats and upgraded digital CCTV cameras.
- 2.4.7 However, there is some dissatisfaction of the quality of the rolling stock used in the Maidstone and Sevenoaks areas which are typically served by Networker trains. Of particular

concern is the short trains that use the Maidstone line due to the platform at Maidstone East only being able to take six cars and the Networkers are not equipped with doors with selective opening which would enable longer trains to be used. When rolling stock is reallocated as a result of the new HS trains next year, it may be possible to deploy some trains with selective door opening capability to the Maidstone line.

Conclusions

- Kent will receive new rolling stock for the High Speed services and this will increase capacity
- benefits from displacement of modern rolling stock due to the introduction of High Speed trains will benefit some lines

2.5 Stations

- 2.5.1 Responsibility of station improvements is split between Southeastern and Network Rail. Southeastern has the ability to make improvements in the short term but can not do major changes requiring large investment as there is no guarantee the stations will still be their asset beyond the current franchise term (2014). Longer term, and larger scale improvements are therefore Network Rail's responsibility and they have various initiatives planned to improve stations, see appendix A.
- 2.5.2 Southeastern is due to spend £16m over the next three years reversing the decline in the condition of stations during the Connex era. Work has started at 33 stations and seven have already been completed. Additionally, Southeastern and Network Rail are, where possible, working together and using the same contractors to ensure improvements are completed quickly reducing disruption.
- 2.5.3 Network Rail is working with local authorities on several schemes. The main initiatives are:
- National Stations Improvement Programme (see appendix B)
 - Access for All (A4A) Programme
 - Car park expansions
 - Commercial developments.
- 2.5.4 There are many different sources of funding for station improvements. There is a need to consolidate and prioritise all station improvement funding.

Facilities

- 2.5.5 During the course of the Select Committee a number of station enhancement schemes were identified:
- **Chatham** – Southeastern wants to expand parking at Chatham urgently but Medway Council would like an all-embracing improvement (including bus interchange facilities) to enhance the masterplan for the area, which is currently being finalised
 - **Maidstone** – Station will be rebuilt as a part of a major redevelopment scheme

2.5.6 In addition, witnesses in the Select Committee also identified improvements they would like to see undertaken including some specific station examples.

- **Faversham** – Improvements needed to ensure the station is fully accessible
- **Rochester** – lengthening of platforms and potential for complete station redevelopment
- **Maidstone** – lengthening of platforms

Access

2.5.7 Good access to stations is going to be increasingly important in maximising the future opportunity of rail in the County. The introduction of High Speed services will attract new users and also alter existing travel patterns, leading to increased rail heading. All stations will continue to experience pressure from car parks reaching capacity and require improved integration with other modes of transport. As a result, many issues surrounding station access were raised during the course of the Select Committee.

2.5.8 Access to Ebbsfleet was a particular concern for some transport users groups and the Highways Agency. Connections to Ebbsfleet International could be improved by a direct pedestrian linkage with Northfleet Station (only 400m as the crow flies but over double that via road). £5m of CIF funding has been provisionally allocated to enhance Northfleet station and improve this link to Ebbsfleet.

2.5.9 Access to Folkestone West will be improved with increased car parking to encourage commuters from a wide hinterland around the town to drive to the station. Folkestone Central has very limited car parking but is well served by public transport.

2.5.10 At Paddock Wood there is evidence there is already considerable rail-heading from Kings Hill and West Malling. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council feel this railheading will be exacerbated by the removal of off-peak Cannon Street services on the Maidstone East line, yet West Malling station's large car parks are full very early in the day.

2.5.11 Consideration also needs to be given to integrated transport, with connecting bus services and new cycle routes to maximise use of sustainable forms of transport and alleviate the likely pressures on car parking facilities at major stations. There is a need for bus services to and from railway stations to run later in the day to meet commuters returning from London. Many witnesses highlighted Kent County Council's role in its area as being particularly central in this regard.

2.5.12 The level of bus information at many stations is considered to be very poor. Stations often lack directions to the nearest bus stops and there is a need to provide sufficient information to enable passengers to make a decision about the suitability of using the bus before leaving the station area.

New Stations

2.5.13 The opportunities associated with the introduction of High Speed services has led to a renewed interest in developing new stations and evidence to the Select Committee was given concerning parkway stations in the Manston/Cliffs End/Minster area west of Ramsgate and at Westenhanger.

- 2.5.14 A Minster Parkway Station would provide improved linkage to Kent International Airport, to adjacent sites identified for development and to a wider hinterland including Pfizer near Sandwich. There were mixed views over the feasibility of this station in evidence given to the Select Committee and within the Committee itself as there were concerns related to potential costs and funding sources as well as the potential impact on slower journey times to the stations in the urban area of Thanet. It was noted that Kent County Council had commissioned consultants to look at the business case for the proposed station.
- 2.5.15 There was also support for a parkway station at Westenhangar from the local Parish Council (Stanford) arguing that it would attract residents from the Hythe area and be a catalyst for development around M20 Junction 11 and Folkestone Race Course. However, there are concerns that if a station were to be built here, journey times to the Folkestone Stations and Dover would be slowed down or, more likely, that the Folkestone West stop would be cut.

Conclusions

- station improvements are undertaken by various different agencies with funding from a variety of sources and the County Council should play a major role in coordinating this work in its area.
- This work should be carried out as soon as possible, given the start of the new services next year and should continue to influence the Route Utilisation Strategy.
- There are concerns over a number of individual stations particularly Northfleet, Folkestone stations and West Malling
- There is a need for better integration between rail and bus rail services and buses need to connect to stations later in the day to serve returning commuters
- bus services information provision at many stations is deemed inadequate
- There are mixed views on the value of a Minster Parkway Station near to Kent International Airport, but support that the County Council has commissioned a study to investigate the business case
- There are similar mixed views over a parkway station at Westenhangar

2.6 Regeneration and Development

- 2.6.1 Economic Development was seen by Kent County Council as one of the key tests for measuring the success of HS1. In particular the County Council highlighted the importance of economic development in Ashford and the Kent Thameside area around Ebbsfleet. The presence of international and fast domestic rail services to London at both these stations will be the catalyst for future development and the opportunities should be grasped in the way that Lille has done in Nord Pas de Calais. The prospect of commercial development adjacent to these stations is very welcome, not least as enhanced job opportunities.
- 2.6.2 In general responses from the District and County Councils indicate confidence that High Speed services will encourage development and facilitate regeneration. This confidence is matched with some of the key stakeholders including Southeastern and Department for Transport. Some developers, however, are more cautious of the benefits particularly with regards to commercial development and investment and the Committee heard conflicting evidence about the effect of HS services on housing development. The current severe

downturn in the housing market understandably dominates present thinking and is making it hard for estate agents to focus on opportunities in the medium and longer term.

2.6.3 Table 2.1 summarises the opinions of various property experts on High Speed rail and property.

Table 2.1 Summary of opinions on High Speed and development

Witness	Are your clients aware of HS1?	Has HS1 had any impact on property at present?	Will HS1 have a future impact on property?
Hirst (Commercial)	Yes	Not yet	Yes – considerable impact
Mouchels (Residential)	Unknown	Some impact	Yes
Mouchels (Commercial)	Unknown	Not yet	Limited impact especially in short term
Hobbs Parker (Residential)	Yes	Yes – some speculation occurring	Yes – extra 5% increase in prices due to HS1
Cluttons (Commercial)	Unknown	Unknown – overshadowed by credit crisis	Limited
Cluttons (Residential)	Yes	Yes – especially around Ebbsfleet	Yes – may be reduced due to large supply

2.6.4 Overall there appears to be a good awareness of the new High Speed services but there is some difference of opinion between residential and commercial property witnesses. Commercial witnesses felt there has been little impact at present on property and the future impact may also be limited. Residential witnesses however suggest that HS has had an impact on property prices with increased speculation. The future impact on residential property will depend on how many new houses are built, particularly in the growth areas around Ebbsfleet and Ashford.

Commercial

2.6.5 Location and connections to the road and rail network are important factors in the purchase of commercial property. Current infrastructure in some parts of the County is poor and Pfizer cited that a decision to locate a new unit in Cambridge instead of Sandwich may have been influenced by poor links to London.

2.6.6 The property experts giving evidence considered that the High Speed services will not have a major impact. However, this contrasts with key stakeholders such as the local authorities and Locate in Kent who envisage the High Speed services having a substantial impact with a

Thanet MP suggesting that the recent investment in his constituency is a direct result of HS1. Areas which are likely to experience the greatest benefit are where the journey time to London is reduced to less than an hour. The hour figure is described as extremely important by Locate in Kent and other property experts in attracting investment.

- 2.6.7 Another prime requirement in attracting new business is quality property and a skilled workforce. Progress is being made in increasing skills with various initiatives through out the county. The availability of quality office space remains a concern. Locate in Kent described how rent is increasing in Ashford as demand increases for quality office space as there is a severe lack of it at present.
- 2.6.8 In a forthcoming survey for Locate in Kent, the overwhelming factor that retains business in Kent, as well as attracts new ones is 'connectivity' and specifically the promise of reduced rail journey times to London and the rest of the country.
- 2.6.9 There is some concern over the pace of business development at Ebbsfleet particularly the slow progress in attracting clients.

Residential

- 2.6.10 The residential market is primarily affected by the quality of the environment and secondly by the ease of access and communication to London.
- 2.6.11 Research by Locate in Kent confirms that relocated companies cite housing a positive contributor to the attractiveness of Kent. Kent has a range of good quality housing stock at lower prices relative to many other areas a similar distance from London.
- 2.6.12 Research carried out by the County Council comparing house prices in Kent with stations to the north of London with comparable journey times to London concluded that:
 - Kent towns have lower levels of commuting to Central London than towns with similar journey times to the north of London
 - Average house prices in areas with journey times less than 30 minutes are typically lower than comparable areas north of London
 - Average house prices in areas with journey times greater than 30 minutes are typically higher than comparable areas north of London
- 2.6.13 On the assumption that house price is a key driver of location, these results would imply there is potential for new people to be attracted to Kent to take advantage of the combination of lower house prices and shorter journey times into Central London.
- 2.6.14 Residential experts in property predict the introduction of High Speed services will have some impact. Due to the imminent opening of HS1, regeneration areas such as Folkestone and Ramsgate have seen particularly high levels of speculation due to the relatively low average price and rental yields. The Thames Gateway and Ashford have also seen speculation with HS1 cited as a key factor.
- 2.6.15 Evidence provided by Hobbs Parker showed that reduced journey times would increase house prices, but there are many other factors that could dilute this effect. The greatest factor affecting house prices in Kent is increased demand from buyers choosing to move in the County from outside the area. Property in areas where journey times remain over an hour will see a growth in demand to a lesser extent.

- 2.6.16 Hobbs Parker expects houses prices around High Speed stations to rise over a period of five to seven years from 2010, by which time the housing market as a whole is expected to stabilise. The rate of increase is forecast to be up to 12% in areas with the shortest journey times such as around Ebbsfleet, with around 7% in areas with longer High Speed journey times such as Thanet. However, growth around Ebbsfleet may be reduced due to a perceived 'uninspiring' surrounding countryside and large scale development may also reduce growth by saturating the market.
- 2.6.17 Investors have however been frustrated that the inauguration date of late 2009 has not created more immediate anticipation amongst buyers and there is a need for more publicity and marketing of the forthcoming significant changes coming in one year's time.

Tourism

- 2.6.18 Many parts of the county, notably in the East, are perceived as being difficult to get to. In a climate where domestic tourism spending is likely to grow and where Kent is constantly improving its tourism, leisure and cultural offer, fast, clean travel is the key to unlocking the potential of the county.
- 2.6.19 Visit Kent expects the introduction of High Speed services will have a huge effect on tourism related economy in Kent and new markets for tourism to Kent will be opened up with better rail links from north London and towns to the north of London to north and east Kent.
- 2.6.20 There are number of ways the opportunities of High Speed can foster growth in tourism related economy of Kent:
- More marketing and publicity of Kent's cultural offer, particularly in new areas that will have better links to Kent when HS services start next year
 - Introduction of more joint ticketing (integrated transport and attractions tickets) such as the Leeds Castle combined rail/bus/entrance ticket.
 - Provide better information of attractions and bus link information at stations
 - promote a Kent-wide Travel Card

Credit Crisis

- 2.6.21 When giving evidence in September 2008, Southeastern had not seen a drop in peak rail demand, while there had been good growth in off peak sales. However, since then there have been many redundancies, particularly in the banking sector in London, so there is likely to be an impact on the next few months' peak sales figures.
- 2.6.22 Opinion was divided on the impact of the credit crisis on passenger rail services in Kent. On the one hand there was a feeling, particularly from Locate in Kent that Kent does not suffer as much from economic slumps as many other areas and that the credit crisis may cause companies to relocate to cheaper areas, such as Kent. However, a drop in central London employment, particularly in Docklands which was identified as driving some of the High Speed growth in patronage, could be a threat to their overall success.
- 2.6.23 The credit crisis is having a major effect on the national property market, and Kent is not exempt from this. The credit crisis is causing an unbalanced market with a much reduced supply of mortgage monies, rapidly declining economic confidence and a fear of job losses. The residential sales market is virtually at a standstill, although there has been some

increase in lettings. There has been a major slow down in transactions of commercial property and also the achievable values.

- 2.6.24 The credit crisis is clearly a threat to the success of High Speed services and will have an impact on all passenger rail services in the future.

Conclusions

- There is a need to raise the awareness of High Speed services
- there has been little impact on commercial property at present and the future effect may be limited
- the primary barriers to commercial growth in the county are lack of quality employment space and workforce skills
- concern that development at Ebbsfleet has not yet started
- some speculation has been occurring in residential property, adjacent to stations on the HS domestic network.
- the High Speed services may increase residential property value by 5%
- High Speed can be used to foster growth in tourism, particularly by emphasising the Kent's cultural offer in new markets around St. Pancras and beyond.
- the scale of the impact of the credit crisis is at present unknown but the slowdown in the economy is likely to impact on the growth in rail travel

2.7 Marketing

- 2.7.1 Marketing and communicating the benefits of High Speed rail are critical in ensuring success, but promoting travel on existing services is equally important. Southeastern has recently undertaken a major advertising campaign particularly promoting GroupSave and off-peak destinations such as Canterbury and Rochester. According to Southeastern, off-peak travel is now increasing, partly as a result of the advertising.

Increased Awareness

- 2.7.2 The introduction of High Speed services will undoubtedly require a substantial advertising campaign to increase awareness. The increase in Southeastern's current advertising on television and London Underground is encouraging this will happen in the lead up to services starting in December 2009.
- 2.7.3 Locate in Kent is trying to encourage businesses to locate in the County with particular emphasis on the benefits of HS1.
- 2.7.4 Residential property experts feel there needs to be an immediate increase in marketing of High Speed services, over a year before their introduction. This would create a knowledge base and would stimulate demand and improve investor confidence. Property agents can perform a vital role in the publicity and this is a role Hobbs Parker would be particularly keen to spearhead such as hosting seminars on how best to increase awareness.
- 2.7.5 St Pancras will offer Kent improved connections and interchange with other north London stations and from the North and the Midlands. In addition, Kent will become a more attractive location to move to for some people currently living in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire

and Cambridgeshire who now access London via St Pancras, Kings Cross and Euston. Kent needs to be promoted and marketed particularly in these locations, building on the work already carried out by Locate in Kent

Destination Marketing

- 2.7.6 Some locations have already started specifically marketing themselves as destinations. For instance, Ashford has begun a comprehensive marketing and communication programme to raise the profile of the town as a growth and High Speed hub particularly promoting Ashford as a place for inward investment.
- 2.7.7 There is a need to coordinate the marketing effort and for the various stakeholders to work together to ensure a consistent message.

Conclusions

- maximise awareness of High Speed services with coordinated and targeted publicity and marketing, beginning as soon as possible

3 Stakeholders

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This chapter introduces some of the key stakeholders and their respective roles. It then describes existing consultation they are involved in, what further consultation is planned and critically what improvements they would like to see.

3.2 Key Stakeholders

- 3.2.1 Southeastern and Kent County Council enjoy a strong relationship and both are committed to working together and with other stakeholders.

Southeastern

- 3.2.2 Southeastern is the Train Operating Company in charge of running domestic rail services in Kent. Owned by Govia, Southeastern is a joint venture between Go-Ahead Group and Keolis, who also operate the neighbouring Southern operating company which overlaps with Southeastern in some areas.
- 3.2.3 A significant amount of stakeholder consultation is undertaken by Southeastern and the general consensus of the Select Committee is that the level of consultation is adequate. There is a good relationship with Kent County Council and Medway Council with Southeastern testing ideas on officials, sharing information and attending formal consultations. Southeastern attends as many Transport and Stakeholder Forums as possible. They participate in events with Stagecoach on bus/rail ticketing and cycle interchange schemes and attend Locate in Kent forums to share future schemes to be included in promotional material.
- 3.2.4 Southeastern undertakes Customer Satisfaction Survey programmes.
- 3.2.5 Southeastern plans to work more closely with other Train Operating Companies (TOCs) operating from London to the Midlands and North on issues such as integration and through ticketing.

Kent County Council

- 3.2.6 Kent County Council governs the majority of Kent. It is responsible for local transportation and highways as well as strategic planning. With regards to rail, the County Council is the public transport co-ordination authority.
- 3.2.7 It is involved in a large degree of stakeholder consultation, as demonstrated by setting up this Select Committee. The Council was successful in lobbying the SRA, Government, franchise bidders and eventually Southeastern to change the franchise specification – restoring more services to Charing Cross/Cannon Street/Blackfriars, reversing station closures and restoring at least all day hourly services to all stations in Kent.

Medway Council

- 3.2.8 Medway Council is a Unitary Authority covering the conurbation of Medway Towns - Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham. As a Unitary Authority it has the same powers as both the County Council and the Districts. Medway works closely with Kent County Council particularly on strategic issues.
- 3.2.9 Medway Council brings together Rail Industry partners and other stakeholders through the Local Strategic Partnership. It is currently working with Southeastern and Network Rail to improve all five main line stations in its area. It has also lobbied key players during the franchising process. A major success has been the retention of the fast Cannon Street services on the north Kent Line.

District Councils

- 3.2.10 There are 12 District Councils within Kent. They do not have a direct responsibility for rail but are responsible for planning and transport is a key factor within this. Rail has an impact on the residents of Districts and impacts planning strategies so Districts do provide input into rail passenger service solutions.
- 3.2.11 Each of the Districts has undertaken different levels of stakeholder consultation and engagement. Of those districts who responded to the Select Committee, Ashford Borough Council are the most active having established a High Speed Train Task Group, chaired by the Commercial Director of Southeastern. The aim of the group is to bring together key actors from planning, transport, rail and bus operators and economic development to ensure a coordinated and cooperative approach to fully exploit the economic trigger that the HS1 link provides. They have also put in place the necessary governance, partnership structures and working protocols and procedures to align funding and programme delivery.

Department for Transport (DfT)

- 3.2.12 Under the franchise agreement, DfT specifies the services it requires the franchisee to operate. Bidders then formulate their bids around that specification. They are obliged to undertake significant consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Network Rail

- 3.2.13 Network Rail is the operator and custodian of the rail network and stations. The primary role of the Network Rail witness at the Select Committee is dealing with the strategy for the future of the rail network through the use of Route Utilisation Strategies (RUS). The strategy is still under development so Network Rail was unable to answer many of the questions raised as work on these issues has not yet been completed.

Passenger Focus

- 3.2.14 Passenger Focus is an independent national rail consumer watchdog, looking after the interests of rail passengers nationally. They try to influence the short and long term decisions that affect rail passengers and so are particularly interested in HS1. Their primary aim is to ensure that the rail industry and government put passengers' needs first, in order to get the best possible deal for the public. One of the passengers' main concerns is the increasing level of crowding. Passenger Focus describes HS1 as new and exciting but it is

likely that the initial excitement and interest will be overshadowed by complaints related to wider issues of capacity.

- 3.2.15 Passenger Focus undertakes a survey which tells them the specific areas in which passengers are satisfied or dissatisfied. They also hold Passenger Forums open to rail users groups and local authorities to discuss passenger rail issues.
- 3.2.16 Passenger Focus feels that while Southeastern is very good at listening and often welcome suggestions, it sometimes takes a long time for these suggestions to be progressed and developed.

Locate in Kent

- 3.2.17 Locate in Kent is a private limited company part-funded by the County Council and other stakeholders from the public and private sector. Their aim is to attract quality jobs to Kent and Medway and to encourage companies to relocate or expand within the area.
- 3.2.18 Locate in Kent has considerable consultation with Southeastern describing them as a commercial company that listens. Locate in Kent are trying to facilitate and improve communication between Southeastern and businesses and developers. There is limited consultation with other transport operators such as bus companies and Eurostar.

Visit Kent

- 3.2.19 Visit Kent is the umbrella name for the tourism arm of Kent County Council and a range of other public and private stakeholders. They work closely with the County Council, Medway Council and Districts to form a unified tourism strategy to bring visitors to Kent.
- 3.2.20 Over the last two years Visit Kent has formed a good relationship with Southeastern as well with bus operators and taxi companies. In addition they have been working with Lastminute.com to increase the exposure of attractions in Kent on the web
- 3.2.21 Visit Kent would like to work with train operators to incorporate accommodation bookings on the internet and also work with other transport operators to integrate ticketing. Visit Kent stress that ongoing public sector support will be critical at all levels to ensure the introduction of High Speed services is success.

Stagecoach Buses

- 3.2.22 Stagecoach Buses is the principal bus operator in the East Kent area and is working with Kent Highways and Southeastern to make big improvements to bus stop information and presentation, while also arranging for Southeastern to stock bus timetables at staffed rail stations.
- 3.2.23 A key recommendation from Stagecoach was that the County Council needs to play an increased role in getting Traveline working properly. It is dependent on getting bus stops mapped correctly and Stagecoach can facilitate the process by providing information electronically saving time and errors. Stagecoach is planning to undertake an in-depth review of the Southeastern timetable when it is published but they identify problems working out which trains people are catching and prioritising which trains would best be served by connections.

- 3.2.24 Connecting bus and train services is clearly useful but holding buses to connect with rail services would potentially disrupt services for all users and it is better to have more frequent bus services (ideally every ten minutes).
- 3.2.25 Stagecoach would like to work closer with Arriva Buses particularly reaching an agreement over acceptance of weekly tickets. They would also like to liaise with Southeastern on the current and projected throughput of the stations and improve bus service where there is potential demand.

Arriva Buses

- 3.2.26 Arriva Buses are a bus operator primarily in the Medway and west Kent area. They also operate Fastrack. They meet representatives of Southeastern at a number of consultations and will be discussing in detail the implications of bus services and working with them to determine where changes need to be made.
- 3.2.27 They are not aware if train timetables are at a detailed consultation stage yet but as Arriva can change bus services at 56 days notice while rail timetables change less frequently, they consider there is sufficient time for consultation.

Conclusions

- There is a need to consider how best to deal with public transport issues either by use of an existing board, creation of another board, forming a formal S101 Joint Committee with Medway or creating a Strategic Public Transport Forum
- There is also a need for the County Council to assist in getting Traveline working properly
- There is also a need to establish a working group with developers and estate agents to work out how best to promote development in Kent.

4 Recommendations

The County Council should:

1. with the evidence available at this time, welcome the new high speed rail services starting in December 2009 serving stations in Kent with new trains.
2. welcome the link to St. Pancras in opening access to a growth area in London and offering excellent connections to the Midlands and the North.
3. use the publicity surrounding the launch of the new services to promote:
 - a. Tourism from London and north of London to Kent, building on the present campaigns by Visit Kent.
 - b. Inward investment by businesses especially knowledge based (i.e. non industrial) businesses to take advantage of Kent's good connectivity building on the work by Locate in Kent.
4. lobby for services lost in the new timetable to be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.
5. work with key partners to ensure a direct pedestrian link between Northfleet and Ebbsfleet stations is created as soon as practicable
6. produce a review of the stations that will be served by High-Speed rail to identify and prioritise work needed to stations and station access to be ready for or soon after the December 2009 launch.
7. encourage the bus and rail companies to introduce more promotional off-peak fares, joint passes, through tickets (such as the BusPlus pass) and Open Jaw tickets.
8. work with the bus companies to develop more frequent services serving rail stations, particularly more late services serving returning rail commuters and to assist with the Traveline project for accurate journey planning.
9. lobby for low introductory fares to ensure early success for the High Speed services.
10. decide how best to consider public transport issues in future either through an existing or new board; a formal S101 Joint Committee between Kent County Council and Medway Council; or by establishing a separate or joint Strategic Public Transport Forum
11. recognise the timescales for influencing rail services and infrastructure provision and begin consideration of the following:
 - a. potential Thameslink services to Maidstone, the Medway Towns, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks
 - b. Network Rail's forthcoming Rail Utilisation Strategy
 - c. The renewal of the Southeastern franchise in Kent 2014

12. consider the feasibility of the following rail services/infrastructure projects:
 - a. direct services from Kent and Medway to Gatwick airport
 - b. rail links to the Kent International and Lydd Airports

13. engage with Southeastern and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) to plan for joint ticketing arrangements to maximise use of public transport to the Games and to minimise disruption to Kent's residents and businesses during the 16 day period of the main Games

Appendix A – Network Rail Improvements

Possible Schemes By 2011

Project Name	Brief Project Description	Notes
Canterbury West A4A	DfT funded scheme to provide an accessible route - new lifts & footbridge	New footbridge with steps and lifts. Aspiration is for completion by December 2009 but not guaranteed.
Chatham Car park development	Decking scheme - Chatham car park	Outline design now complete with hoped for completion of December 2009. LA not supportive, they wish to see a much bigger scheme for which they don't appear to have funding or plans. Southeastern urgently require the facility to cope with demand.
Folkestone Closure of Harbour Branch Line	Construction of a new platform, access and facilities in sidings at Folkestone East to serve Orient Express.	Works at Folkestone West to cater for VSOE train nearly complete. Separate strand of work is underway to close the Harbour branch but no date for this is available.
Greenhithe Modular Station	Installation of a new modular station to replace the existing station facilities	Will be finished by the end of the year.
Sittingbourne A4A	DfT funded scheme to provide an accessible route - new lifts & footbridge tbc	Part of the Access for All (A4A) DfT programme. Funded and in detailed design for delivery by 2011.
Staplehurst A4A	DfT funded scheme to provide an accessible route - new lifts & footbridge	Part of the Access for All (A4A) DfT programme but in construction, currently halted due to the discovery of further great Crested newts. Hoped to complete in spring 2009.
Strood A4A	DfT funded scheme to provide an accessible route - new lifts & footbridge	Part of the Access for All (A4A) DfT programme. Funded and in detailed design for delivery by 2011.
Tunbridge Wells 12-Car Turnback Siding	Signal & civils works to allow 12 car trains to turnback at Tunbridge Wells	On schedule for delivery by December 2009, will allow regular interval four trains per hour Tunbridge Wells/London

Folkestone West car park development	Works to develop a car park on the old BRB land	This scheme will be implemented if the necessary land can be purchased at a
	on the upside at Folkestone West	price that allows a viable business case. Negotiations are on-going, no forecast can be made on completion or whether the scheme will go ahead
Marden car park development	Works to develop a car park on the Spacia land on the upside at Marden	work being carried out by Southeastern, not Network Rail, to extend Marden station car park.
Sandwich Golf Course Temporary Station	Installation of a Temporary station facility to be used when the British Open Golf is being played	Discussions taking place with local authorities this autumn. Will proceed subject to technical feasibility and third party funding being available.

Possible Scheme 2011 to 2015

Project Name	Brief Project Description	Notes
12 Car Suburban Scheme	Upgrade infrastructure to allow operation of 12-car trains on routes to Dartford via Sidcup.	This is in the High Level Output Statement and is thus very likely to happen. Program covers various routes up to 2015
Gravesend A4A	DfT funded scheme to provide an accessible route	Ties in with Gravesham's Transport Quarter programme. Is funded in principle but no completion date.
Gravesend Remodelling 12 Car Operation	Track Layout Changes and platform extensions to allow 12 car services to terminate	This is in the High Level Output Statement and is thus very likely to happen but it is constrained by Darnley Road bridge. Re-building of this bridge by others dictates the scope of the extensions. Network Rail does not have funding to replace the bridge
Stone Crossing Level Crossing Closure	Closure of Stone Level Crossing and the installation of a pedestrian footbridge	In outline design. Business case looks positive but a great deal of stakeholder consultation to be carried out. No completion date yet but brings significant benefits if the case can be proved.
Canterbury West Car park development	Works to improve car parking facilities at CBW	On hold pending discussions with Southeastern and Canterbury City Council
Gravesend Car park development	Gravesend car park decking scheme	This sits in the National Car Park initiative. It will tie in with the Transport Quarter proposals. No completion date or confirmed funding.

Possible Schemes post 2015

Project Name	Brief Project Description	Notes
Ashford to Hastings Route Upgrade	The scheme would involve improvements to the route, including double-tracking	The Kent RUS will lay down what, if anything is to be done to upgrade the route.
Dover Port Rail Reconnection	A rail connection east of Shakespeare Tunnel with a main to main crossover for arriving down trains	Work is proceeding on this scheme which is in outline design. It will be for the funder to decide if and when it goes ahead to completion.
Howbury Park Intermodal Freight Terminal	Network connection for a freight terminal at Howbury Park	Freight connection to new intermodal freight terminal. Funding and completion are entirely dependant on the third party.
Isle of Grain Freight Route	Provide enhanced infrastructure on the Isle of Grain freight route to provide extra timetable opportunities.	Work will be done in the next few months to determine what, if any, business case exists to improve freight access to/from the Grain branch. No funding nor business cases identified at time of writing but South London RUS supports investigating what could be done
Kent Route Phase 1 National Car Park Initiative	Enhanced Car Parking facilities at 5 stations on the Kent Route as proposed by Southeastern	Covers a programme of car park decking schemes at up to 18 stations in Kent. Funding available where a business case exists but no timescales are available as programme is in development.
Pluckley Platform Extension	Platform extension at Pluckley Station.	Will be carried out as part of a wider programme, however likely that selective door opening will be the best value option at this lightly used station.
Rochester Station Turnback12 Car Operations:	Proposed Platform extensions to enable 12 car CTRL DS to terminate	Existing station cannot be extended so a study is being carried out as part of <i>the East Kent Re-signalling projects</i> , and with Medway Renaissance, to identify solutions one of which might be a new station. Subject to business case.
Sittingbourne Station New Access and Footbridge	A proposed pedestrian bridge spanning across the tracks at Sittingbourne Station.	Scheme is dependant on a retail development the status of which is uncertain at time of writing.
Swanley A4A	DfT funded scheme to provide an accessible route - new lifts on existing	Due to restricted platform widths, and the great cost of resolving them, this scheme is on hold until 2012. It will be for DfT to decide if it

	footbridge	represents good value for money.
Ashford Park Farm New Development	Proposed new station at Park Farm Ashford to cater for a major housing development in the area.	On hold pending recommendations of Kent RUS and consultations with stakeholders.
Ashford to Ramsgate Linespeed improvements	Improved journey times between Ramsgate and St Pancras	Project will identify what, if any, line speed improvements can be made on this route. Will be funded and carried out only if a business case can be proven.
Minster Parkway New Station	Creation of a new station at Minster to act as a Parkway for East Kent	Proposed station. No business case or funding identified. Next steps will be informed by the Kent RUS.
Sevenoaks Car park development	Decking scheme - Sevenoaks car park	Part of national car park programme.
Sittingbourne Car park development	Decking scheme - Sittingbourne car park	Part of national car park programme.
Tonbridge Car park development	Decking scheme - car park	Part of national car park programme.

Appendix B – National Station Improvements Programme

National Stations Improvement Programme to 2014

Station	Indicative Scope
Ashford	Customer information (current position of CIS conflicts with passenger movements at top of stairways, increased footfall at the station will create further safety problems with this site, Customer toilets, Front of station extension to increase size and passenger capacity of concourse, Interchange with buses and other modes of transport and Bicycle parking.
Canterbury West	Footbridge, lifts, waiting rooms, extended booking hall, customer information, toilets, fencing, interchange.
Chatham	Customer waiting accommodation, lights & fittings, Customer information, Car parking improvements & Other Works (lifts)
Dartford	Station cleaning, Customer toilets, Customer waiting accommodation, Customer Information, Doors & entrances, Surfaces including floors & platforms, Footbridge. cycle parking, Litter bins, Street Furnishing and miscellaneous works. Possible new station.
Dover Priory	HS1 station, current project to improve interchange, does not have further customer information, or increased car parking needs in the scope.
Folkstone Central	station cleaning, waiting accommodation, drainage, gutters, surfaces including floors and platforms, information, toilets refurbishment.
Gillingham	Station cleaning, Customer waiting accommodation, Customer information, Light fitting, Surfaces including floors and platforms, Footbridge, Bicycle parking, Litter bins, Street furnishing, Drainage and water dispersal, passenger seating.
Gravesend	Toilets, waiting accommodation, platform extensions plus refurbishments, CIS, light fittings, fencing, cycle parking.

Margate	Cleaning, waiting accommodation, surfaces. This station also has a large unused building, using NSIP to rationalise the space.
Northfleet	New station and pedestrian link to Ebbsfleet
Paddock Wood	Refurbish footbridge and heritage aspects of the station. Cleaning, information, cycle and motorcycle parking, toilets, waiting areas seating and shelters
Rochester	Possible new station.
Sevenoaks	Customer waiting accommodation, Cleaning and redecorating, Customer information, Lights & fittings, Doors & entrances, Customer security, Customer toilets, Street furnishing, Drainage and water dispersal, Passenger seating,
Sittingbourne	Waiting accommodation, toilet refurbishment. Platform surfaces, drainage guttering, customer information, seating, cycle parking, street furniture.
Strood	Waiting accommodation, staff accommodation, footbridge, lifts, seating, shelters, drainage platform surfaces, information, cycle parking.
Swanley	Waiting accommodation, platform surfaces, seating, drainage, cycle parking, booking hall refurbishment.
Tonbridge	Cleaning and redecorating, Passenger seating, Customer security, Customer toilets, Doors & entrances, Surfaces including floors and platforms, Landscaping, Footbridges, Street furnishing, Drainage and water dispersal.
Tunbridge Wells	Cleaning and redecorating, Passenger seating, Customer security, Customer toilets, Doors & entrances, Surfaces including floors and platforms, Landscaping, Footbridges, Street furnishing, Drainage and water dispersal.

