

## **REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 DECEMBER 2008**

### **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE – HIGH SPEED 1 (CTRL) DOMESTIC RAIL SERVICES**

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

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#### **Summary**

The committee is asked to endorse the findings and recommendations of the Kent County Council Select Committee on High Speed 1 (CTRL) Domestic Rail Services and make recommendations to the Cabinet on future work about this matter.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 Any response from this Council to Kent County Council's Select Committee or Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for Kent will need to take account of any relevant Council policies such as the Local Transport Plan 2 and the Development Plan.
- 1.2 There are no LAA target specifically related to the provision of rail services as this is an area where local authorities have very little direct control. However, there are two national indicators which consider access by public transport. These are:-

NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

and

NI176 – Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes).

Medway's Local Strategic Partnership has chosen to set a target for NI175. This requires that 100% of new residential units in developments of 50 or more are accessible by a public transport service (located within 500 metres of the development) that provide links with a frequency of 30 minutes or better to a town centre in Medway at peak times.

- 1.3 The levels of rail service which are expected to be provided will meet this requirement for any developments within the specified distance of a rail station.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 21 October 2008, the committee considered this matter and full details were provided in that report. However the main points have been highlighted again from paragraph 2.3 below.
- 2.2 On 21 October 2008, the Committee agreed the following recommendations:
  - (i) The KCC Select Committee – High Speed 1 (CTRL) Domestic Rail Services recommendations are sent to the Committee when they are published for further consideration by the Committee and that Councillor Kenneth Bamber, as Medway Council's representative at the KCC Select Committee, is invited to the meeting;
  - (ii) officers await the proposals set out by Network Rail in their draft Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) due to be published in early 2009 and that a presentation and report is submitted to an appropriate meeting in order that Members may consider this matter and the proposals fully. The Committee could then make a decision as to whether it wished to respond to the draft proposals.

Councillor Kenneth Bamber has confirmed his attendance for this meeting.

- 2.3 The issues the KCC Select Committee considered were:

- Regeneration effects linked to fares – particularly on Channel Tunnel Rail Link Domestic Service (CTRL – DS) – will the premium fares required in the franchise have a deterrent effect?
- Fairness of fare rises compared to rail fares in London
- Future train capacity
- Access to stations/car parking capacity/bus shuttle services
- Parkways (Minster and Westenhanger)
- Rail heading (Ebbsfleet).

- 2.4 The aim of the committee was to identify the best rail passenger services solution for Kent (including Medway), both in terms of:
- The immediate benefits of improvement to journey times and services to London and around “Kent”; and
  - The long term benefits to the regeneration of “Kent” and the likely impacts on the wider rail network and transport in the area of improved services.

This involved investigating the following:

- Current proposals of the franchise holder, Southeastern, for services from December 2009 and proposed fare levels;
  - Forecasted effects of these proposals and whether they are robust – including whether rising general fare levels and additional premium fares on CTRL DS will prove to be a deterrent to travel by rail;
  - The effects the proposed services will have on the regeneration of Growth Areas and the coastal towns;
  - The case for new parkway stations;
  - The likelihood of rail users heading to certain stations with significantly improved services and the likely effects;
  - Access to stations forecast to attract significant rises in passenger volumes.
- 2.5 Network Rail is working to produce its Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the Kent network. The objective of the RUS process is:-

“To make effective and efficient use and development of the route capacity available, consistent with the funding that is, or is reasonably likely to become, available during the period of the route utilisation strategy and with the licence holder’s performance of the duty [to operate, maintain, renew and develop the network]”

In Kent, this will cover the issues and pressures on the network for the next 30 years.

- 2.6 It is expected that the draft Kent RUS will be published for consultation in the Spring of 2009. This will give a further opportunity to put forward the Council’s views on the future provision of rail services.

### **3 KCC Select Committee report**

- 3.1 The Kent County Council Select Committee draft findings and are attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The key recommendations of the committee are summarised below

- 3.3 This report is being formally considered by KCC's Cabinet on 1 December 2008 and may be subject to change at that time.
- 3.4 Recommendation 10 of the Select Committee report is that Medway Council should work formally with Kent County Council to consider public transport issues in the future. There may clearly be benefits in presenting a united front to the operators, although it would need to be recognised that there will be circumstances where the interests of the two areas will differ.
- 3.5 Appendices A and B in the Kent report outlines the projects which Network Rail presented to the Select Committee. Since that time there have been some developments in respect of Medway stations which are summarised below:-

Strood and Rochester	Joint project established between Medway Council and Network Rail to consider options to overcome accessibility issues and operational barriers; and also to ensure stations complement regeneration.
Chatham	Working group established with Network Rail, Southeastern and Medway Council to explore the opportunities for greater enhancements than those currently planned by Network Rail.
Gillingham	The Council has secured £1.5 million CIF funding for improvements at Gillingham station, and its surrounding area to complement the National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP) funding dedicated by the railway industry to this station.

#### **4 Train services from December 2009**

- 4.1 Information is starting to emerge on the train service to be introduced in December 2009 when the new services start running to St Pancras using the High Speed Line. This is being included with this report for the Committee's information. Appendix 2 summarises the number of trains to the various London terminals for the morning peak period (ie arriving in London between 0700 and 1000) and also between the peak periods.
- 4.2 The information currently available shows the total number of trains to be provided, which generally will increase. It does not differentiate these between the "fast" and "slow" services. It is known, however, that the reduction in Victoria services at off-peak times will mean the loss of one of the "slow" trains per hour, ie one of the services that stops at most stations to Bromley. These trains are generally less popular from Medway than the faster services.

#### **5. Financial and legal implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial or legal implications for the Council arising from this report. If projects develop through the Local Transport Plan or other partnership arrangements, the detail will be considered through the Council's normal procedures.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The committee is asked to:

i endorse the findings of the Kent County Council Select Committee on High Speed 1 (CTRL) Domestic Rail Services;

and to recommend the Cabinet to:

ii support the introduction of a formal working arrangement with Kent County Council to consider public transport issues;

iii respond to the consultation on the Kent Route Utilisation Strategy when it is published early in 2009, taking into account overview and scrutiny's views at that time.

### **Lead officer contact**

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### **Background papers**

The Future of Rail in Kent – report of Joint Select Committee with KCC – January 2003

Integrated Kent Franchise – Stakeholder Briefing Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) – December 2005