

# Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

**11 April 2017**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

## South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation: Shaping the Future - March 2017

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Andrew Thompson – Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Policy)
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the draft response (Appendix B) is approved for submission to the consultation, subject to any amendments agreed by this Committee.

### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	11 April 2017

# South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation: Shaping the Future - March 2017

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The South Eastern Rail Franchise is due to expire in December 2018. The Department for Transport (DfT) now seeks input from stakeholders as regards the current service and the priorities for the next franchise period. The consultation poses a series of questions, and seeks views on a number of specific measures. The consultation document is provided at Appendix A and the draft response is set out at Appendix B.
  - 1.2 This Committee previously provided comments to the Kent County Council consultation on the new South Eastern Rail Franchise (March 2016) and these, together with the objectives of the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) form the basis of the draft response where appropriate.
  - 1.3 Councillors are recommended to approve the response, subject to any amendments deemed necessary.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The South Eastern Rail Franchise serves passengers in south east London and parts of Kent and East Sussex. The franchise is principally a commuter service with around 90% of journeys either to or from London and around 65% of passengers travelling at peak times. The current franchise, awarded to Southeastern, was extended in 2014 but will expire in December 2018.
- 2.2 The next franchise period will run to at least 2025 (potentially up to 2028) and, as part of the process of awarding the new franchise, the DfT is undertaking consultation with stakeholders and passengers to inform this process.
- 2.3 The DfT consultation document describes the current network as comprising three distinct segments:
  - Metro routes** - serving commuters within and just outside Greater London;
  - Mainline routes** - longer distance routes connecting London and parts of Kent and East Sussex; and
  - High Speed routes** - HS1 between Ashford and St. Pancras with connections to other Kent towns.
- 2.4 Maidstone town is directly affected by a number of key "mainline" routes, providing services to London, but also to Tonbridge, Ashford and the Medway Towns. Mainline routes also serve each of the Rural Service Centres. Changes to the routes, frequencies and overall quality of services as part of the next franchise award could therefore have significant implications for rail connectivity and services in the borough.

- 2.5 The DfT consultation recognises that many of the services are crowded at peak times and that customer satisfaction with the services has steadily deteriorated over recent years with overcrowding, delays and cancellations and customer services the primary causes for this. Given the scale of growth anticipated in London and the South East of England in the coming years, it is clear that a robust response is required to deliver additional capacity and improve customer satisfaction with services.
- 2.6 In response therefore the consultation document proposes a series of generalised measures to increase capacity at peak times including the provision of longer trains, increasing the proportion of "metro" style trains (which provide fewer seats but more standing space) and the removal of first class seating areas. The draft response (Appendix B) sets out that these measures are supported in principle, but recognises that "metro" style trains may not be suited to longer distance journeys.
- 2.7 In regards to new services, the consultation confirms the current plan for the new Thameslink service from Maidstone East to London Blackfriars and the "priority" to take full advantage of this route is to be welcomed. The consultation seeks views the extension of the High Speed service from St. Pancras to Hastings, Bexhill and Rye via Ashford however the impact of this service on Maidstone would be limited.
- 2.8 To reduce journey times, the consultation seeks views on reducing stops at intermediate stations along key routes, and specifically cites the Tonbridge to Ashford route which serves the Rural Service Centres of Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn. The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) sets out that the Council will resist any reduction to the speed or frequency of services from these stations and therefore the draft response reflect this.
- 2.9 The consultation also seeks views on any additional services which stakeholders would wish to see delivered. The ITS sets out a series of specific proposals to bring services to London more in line with those experienced in neighbouring authorities, and these were reflected in this Committee's response to the KCC consultation on the matter in March 2016. These proposals and priorities are therefore also reflected within the draft consultation response.
- 2.10 The consultation identifies a series of general measures to improve access and facilities and these are to be welcomed. In line with wider ITS objectives to improve interchange facilities and encourage modal shift, the draft response emphasises the need for door to door (multi-modal) journey planning, and potentially ticketing, to take account of local bus networks, walking and cycling infrastructure and, where necessary, commuter car parking. Again, the draft response reflects the specific proposals and priorities set out in the response to the KCC consultation last year.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

3.1 **Option A:** Approve the draft response (Appendix B), subject to any amendments deemed necessary by this Committee, for submission in response to the DfT consultation.

3.2 **Option B:** Do not submit a response to the DfT consultation.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Option A is preferred as it is considered important that the Council engages proactively with this consultation in order to shape the next franchise agreement. In doing so, it is appropriate to reflect the priorities for rail infrastructure identified within the ITS.

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### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

5.1 This Committee has previously considered priorities for rail infrastructure through the development of the ITS and the outcome of this work can now shape the Council's input to this DfT consultation.

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### **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

6.1 If this Committee approves the draft response for submission, subject to any amendments deemed necessary, the response will be sent before the closing date of 23 May 2017.

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### **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This report has regard to strategic proposals by the DfT that will affect the rail network in Maidstone Borough over the medium to long term.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	The response will ensure the Council's views and ITS priorities can be taken into account as the new franchise is further developed.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Financial</b>	The cost of inputting to the consultation process will be contained within existing service budgets.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Staffing</b>	No staffing implications. This will be managed with existing	Rob Jarman – Head of

	staffing resources.	Planning and Development
<b>Legal</b>	No legal implications.	Estelle Culligan, Interim Head of Legal Partnership
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The consultation recognises the need to improve accessibility and facilities at stations. No specific proposals are identified in respect of services and therefore the consultation proposals are not detailed enough to raise any concerns.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	Regulatory processes in respect of this matter have been followed.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	No implications.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	The consultation proposals do not raise any concerns.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development
<b>Asset Management</b>	No implications.	Rob Jarman – Head of Planning and Development

## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation – Shaping the Future (March 2017)
- Appendix B: Draft response to South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation – Shaping the Future (March 2017)

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

