

Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee

11 October 2016

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

Yes

Consultation – Govia Thameslink 2018 Timetable

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Goodenough, Transport Planner, Spatial Policy
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All Wards

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That Councillors note the proposed 2018 Govia Thameslink timetable consultation and agree that a response is provided by officers under delegated authority to the consultation questions set out in section 4 of the report. This will then be sent to Govia Thameslink as the Council's formal response to the 2018 timetable consultation by the deadline of 8 December 2016.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough -

Delivering an improved public transport network is an essential element of the adopted Integrated Transport Strategy, mitigating the impact of the growth in demand for travel and helping to deliver a shift away from reliance on the private car.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	11 October 2016

Consultation – Govia Thameslink 2018 Timetable

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) consultation which sets out proposed changes to the timetable which will be operated by GTR in 2018 following completion of the Thameslink Programme. The consultation launched on 15 September 2016 and will close on 8 December 2016. As part of this exercise an event is scheduled at Maidstone East station between 6:30am and 9:00am on Tuesday 29 November.
 - 1.2 The consultation webpage can be found at <http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/your-journey/timetable-consultation/>. Attached at Appendix One is the information sheet summarising the proposed timetable changes for Kent Thameslink. The key change affecting Maidstone from 2018 is the proposed introduction of a half-hourly Cambridge – Stevenage – Central London (via London Bridge) – Swanley – Maidstone East service.
 - 1.3 Members are recommended to agree the proposed response set out in Section 4 of the report and that it is forwarded to GTR as the Council's formal response to the consultation by the deadline of 8 December 2016.
-

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has launched a Consultation which sets out proposed changes to the timetable which will be operated by GTR in 2018 following completion of the Thameslink Programme. When the Programme completes in 2018, it will transform north-south travel through London; journeys will be improved with trains every two to three minutes through central London at peak times, improved connections, modern track and new trains will provide additional passenger capacity. This will be the biggest timetable change on the routes affected in a generation.
- 2.2 The consultation launched on 15 September 2016 and will close on 8 December 2016. As part of this exercise an event is scheduled at Maidstone East station between 6:30am and 9:00am on Tuesday 29 November. The consultation webpage can be found at <http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/your-journey/timetable-consultation/>.
- 2.3 Information sheet 7 which details the proposed changes for Kent Thameslink is attached as Appendix One. The following new Thameslink services are proposed to be introduced in 2018:
 - Cambridge – Stevenage – Central London (via London Bridge) – Swanley – Maidstone East
 - Luton – St Albans City – West Hampstead Thameslink – Central London (via Elephant & Castle) – Catford – Bromley South – Orpington

- Luton – St Albans City – West Hampstead Thameslink – central London (via London Bridge) – Greenwich – Abbey Wood – Dartford – Medway towns

2.4 The Cambridge to Maidstone East service is proposed to operate half-hourly Monday to Saturday. To improve journey times between Maidstone East and Central London, and to re-instate journey opportunities previously removed in 2009, these trains will run via London Bridge (instead of Elephant & Castle). Previously the Maidstone East services were intended to be predominately peak only. It is now proposed for this service to operate all day Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays. Some services will also be extended to or from Ashford International.

2.5 Specific details of the proposed service are presented below (source: GTR 2018 Timetable Consultation, page 20)

Thameslink Mainline Route TL7:

Cambridge (stopping) – Stevenage – Central London (via London Bridge) – Swanley – Maidstone East – (Ashford International)

Serving: Cambridge, Foxton, Shepreth, Meldreth, Royston, Ashwell & Morden, Baldock, Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin, Stevenage, Knebworth, Welwyn North, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Potters Bar, Finsbury Park, London St Pancras International, Farringdon, City Thameslink, London Blackfriars, London Bridge, (St Mary Cray or Swanley – see below), Otford, Borough Green & Wrotham, West Malling and Maidstone East. A limited number of trains will be extended between Maidstone East and Ashford International serving Bearsted only.

	Proposed Frequency (trains per hour / intervals in minutes)				
	Mon-Fri Peak	Mon-Fri High Peak	Mon-Sat Daytimes	Mon-Sat Evenings	Sundays
Cambridge to and from Maidstone East	2tph	2tph	2tph	1tph	1tph (See Note 1)
	Every 30 minutes	Every 30 minutes	Every 30 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes
Cambridge to and from Ashford Int	2 trains AM Peak 1 train PM Peak (See Note 2)	2 trains AM Peak 1 train PM Peak (See Note 2)	No Service	3 trains (See Note 3)	No Service
	Limited Service	Limited Service		Limited Service	

Note 1: On Sundays Route TL7 will operate between Cambridge and London Kings Cross only.

Note 2: Four trains will operate between Ashford International and Cambridge. In the morning peak, a total of four trains are proposed, two of which will arrive Central London in the high peak period. In the evening peak, two peak trains will operate, one of which will depart Central London in the high peak period.

Note 3: Three trains will operate from Cambridge to Ashford International on Monday to Friday evenings only. There will be no Saturday evening service.

*Thameslink Mainline Routes TL6 and TL7 combine to provide four trains per hour (Mondays to Saturdays) between Cambridge, Stevenage and Central London.
Route GN1 will also provide additional fast services between Cambridge and London Kings Cross with a combined frequency of six trains per hour*

2.6 This consultation represents Phase 1. A second consultation phase will take place during spring and summer 2017 regarding the detailed timetable before it is finalised formally with Network Rail. Changes to train services will happen throughout 2018 to deliver the final service in December. The

vast majority of changes will commence from the timetable change on Sunday 13 May 2018.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are two options available to Members. Firstly, the Council could send GTR a formal response to the 2018 timetable consultation. Secondly, Members could choose not to make a formal response to the 2018 timetable consultation.
 - 3.2 Choosing to make a representation will enable the Council to communicate to GTR its strong support for the proposed restoration of direct services to London Bridge, as well as the new journey opportunities provided by the service to Cambridge. It will also enable the Council's views to be taken into account regarding the proposed service stopping pattern, namely that the service is only able to stop at St Mary Cray or Swanley and not both due to turnaround times at Maidstone East.
 - 3.3 If no formal representation is made, this would result in a missed opportunity to the Council to make its views known in respect to the proposed timetable, as per Action PT9 in the adopted Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS). The timetable is likely to be in effect for the entire duration of the Local Plan and ITS, i.e. to 2031.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is for the Council to submit a formal representation to GTR before the consultation end date of 8 December 2016. This will enable the Council's views to influence the detailed timetable which will largely become effective from 13 May 2018.
- 4.2 The consultation questionnaire is very detailed as it also covers GTR's other brands, namely Southern, Gatwick Express and Great Northern. The main questions affecting Maidstone are:
 - Question 18: Do you support the proposal for Thameslink Maidstone East services to operate via London Bridge instead of Elephant & Castle restoring train services previously withdrawn in 2009?
 - Question 23: Comments on the Thameslink Mainline Route TL7.
 - Question 28: The proposed Thameslink service between Cambridge and Maidstone East is only able to serve either St. Mary Cray or Swanley due to insufficient time to enable the train to arrive in time to start its return journey from Maidstone East. Please select which station you would prefer the train to call at.
- 4.3 It is recommended that a consultation response is submitted by officers under delegated authority, referencing the above mentioned questions and confirming the Council's strong support for the proposals. The response will also reflect the view of the Committee regarding the preference for services to stop at St. Mary Cray or Swanley.

4. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 4.2 The consultation closes on 8 December 2016. If agreed, a consultation response will be sent to GTR by officers under delegated authority to meet that deadline.
- 4.3 GTR will then review all Phase 1 consultation responses and refine the 2018 timetable into an all-day version for further consultation during spring/summer 2017. The bulk of the timetable changes are scheduled to take place in May 2018.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The proposed new half hourly service from Maidstone East to Cambridge via London Bridge is a key element in delivering the package of sustainable transport measures identified in the adopted ITS. It will help to mitigate the transport impacts of planned development and reduce reliance on the private car.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Risk Management	No significant risks are identified as the proposals are positive news for Maidstone. However, as comprehensive rail timetable revisions usually occur extremely infrequently (c. every 25 years) it is important that the Council's strong support is made clear during the consultation.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Financial	No specific financial implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Head of Finance and Resources & Finance Team
Staffing	No specific financial implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Legal	No specific implications arise	Kate Jardine

	from the consideration of this report.	Team Leader Planning Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	There is evidence that rail use is skewed towards higher income groups. However, the proposed service will benefit those without access to a car for a variety of journeys, not just to London. It is therefore considered that the proposals will have a neutral or positive equality impact.	Anna Collier Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The proposals will encourage sustainable travel behaviour and reduced car dependence, therefore having positive carbon and congestion impacts.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Community Safety	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Human Rights Act	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Procurement	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development & Head of Finance and Resources
Asset Management	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development

6. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Information Sheet 7 – Kent Thameslink