



Kent Rail Strategy 2021

Public Consultation Report
January 2021



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction..... | 4 |
| 2. Consultation process..... | 4 |
| 3. Consultation responses..... | 8 |
| 4. Kent Rail Strategy ambitions | 10 |
| 5. Rail policy..... | 15 |
| 6. Fares policy..... | 20 |
| 7. Rail infrastructure enhancements..... | 25 |
| 8. Rolling stock improvements..... | 29 |
| 9. Passenger services | 33 |
| 10. Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)..... | 37 |
| 11. Rail freight provision..... | 40 |
| 12. International rail services | 44 |
| 13. Any other comments about the draft Kent Rail Strategy | 47 |
| 14. Equality analysis | 51 |
| 15. You said, we did..... | 57 |
| 16. Next steps | 62 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1 - Frequency of downloads of the draft Kent Rail Strategy consultation materials and Rail summit invitation | 6 |
| Table 2 - Engagement levels with social media posts advertising the draft Kent Rail Strategy consultation..... | 6 |
| Table 3 - Frequency of responses to Question 3 by theme concerning the strategy's ambition | 11 |
| Table 4 - Frequency of responses to Question 4 by theme concerning the strategy's rail policy ... | 16 |
| Table 5 - Frequency of responses to Question 5 by theme concerning the strategy's fares policy | 21 |
| Table 6 - Frequency of responses to Question 6 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for infrastructure enhancement..... | 25 |
| Table 7 - Frequency of responses to Question 7 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for rolling stock | 30 |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



| | |
|---|----|
| Table 8 - Frequency of responses to Question 8 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for passenger services..... | 34 |
| Table 9 - Frequency of responses to Question 9 by theme concerning the strategy's Community Rail Partnerships (CRP) proposals | 38 |
| Table 10 - Frequency of responses to Question 10 by theme concerning the Strategy's Rail Freight Provision Proposals | 41 |
| Table 11 - Frequency of responses to Question 11 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for International Rail services | 45 |
| Table 12 - Frequency of responses to Question 13 by theme concerning any other comments respondents had on the draft Kent Rail Strategy | 47 |
| Table 13 - Frequency of responses to Question 13 by theme concerning equality and diversity ... | 55 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1 - Number of respondents replying as Kent residents or other | 9 |
| Figure 2 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's stated ambitions | 10 |
| Figure 3 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with the strategy's actions for the rail policy..... | 15 |
| Figure 4 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for the fares policy..... | 20 |
| Figure 5 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with Strategy's actions for Infrastructure Enhancement..... | 25 |
| Figure 6 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for rolling stock | 29 |
| Figure 7 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for passenger services..... | 33 |
| Figure 8 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for Community Rail Partnerships..... | 37 |
| Figure 9 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with Strategy's actions for Rail Freight Provision | 40 |
| Figure 10 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with the strategy's proposed actions for International Rail services | 44 |
| Figure 11 - Stated gender of respondents, by proportion..... | 51 |
| Figure 12 - Number of respondents across age groups | 52 |
| Figure 13 - Proportion of respondents stating they belong to a religion or hold a belief..... | 53 |
| Figure 14 - Proportion of respondents considering themselves to have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 | 54 |
| Figure 15 - Proportion of respondents stating they are Carers | 54 |

1. Introduction

The consultation on the draft Kent Rail Strategy 2021 was undertaken to provide the opportunity for a wide range of people to comment on its proposals. Consultees were invited to provide their feedback via a questionnaire, which was available online and in hard copy on request. All the responses have been collated and considered in the analysis of the consultation's results.

The background to the preparation of the strategy was the status of the current train service operator in Kent, Southeastern, and the expected imminent process to be launched by the Department for Transport (DfT) for a new South Eastern concession. The draft rail strategy was prepared to provide Kent with a comprehensive, fully consulted set of proposals for rail service levels, rolling-stock and infrastructure enhancements, for this new concession, which, once an operator is appointed, is expected to serve Kent for at least the next decade.

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee considered the draft Kent Rail Strategy 2021 on 15 September 2020, prior to commencing its public consultation. The consultation process lasted for eight weeks, from 23 September to 17 November 2020, during which time Kent County Council (KCC)'s annual rail summit webinar was held on 13 October, attended by 108 people from across the rail industry, local government and other stakeholder groups. This online event included a presentation on the strategy and offered participants the opportunity to ask questions about its proposals. The final version of the strategy will be presented to Cabinet on 25 January 2021, when Members will be asked to adopt the strategy as the Council's policy.

2. Consultation process

Pre-consultation engagement was carried out with rail industry stakeholders to ensure that the draft consultation strategy was accurate and updated in respect of technical railway data.

A wide range of stakeholder groups were identified for the consultation, including all levels of public authority in Kent as well as those who attend the annual KCC rail summit. The full list of all groups and organisations invited to respond is as follows:

- Members of Kent County Council
- Members of Parliament in Kent
- District Councils in Kent
- Medway Council (a unitary authority)

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



- Kent Association of Local Councils (for all town & parish councils in Kent)
- Community Rail Partnerships in Kent and Sussex
- East Sussex County Council
- Essex County Council
- Surrey County Council
- Transport for the South East
- Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
- Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
- London Borough of Bexley
- Transport for London
- Passenger Focus
- Rail Future
- Rail Travellers' Associations
- Rail Users' Groups
- KCC Annual Rail Summit attendees
- KCC Disability Staff Group
- KCC LGBTQ+ Staff Group
- KCC Black and Minority Ethnic Forum Staff Group
- Southeastern
- Network Rail
- High Speed 1
- Eurostar
- Govia Thameslink Railway
- Great Western Railway
- Modern Railways

In addition to the above, KCC is continually engaging with partners and bodies that aid KCC in delivering its policies and services to businesses and residents of the county. We will continue to engage on the draft Kent Rail Strategy, such as with bodies like the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and receive feedback until we adopt the strategy.

The consultation was hosted on KCC's consultation directory kent.gov.uk/kentrailstrategy2021 and a link to the consultation was provided on the rail policy webpage. The consultation draft strategy and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) were both available to download from the consultation page in Word and PDF. Consultee could also access the online questionnaire and a Word version. The rail summit was promoted on the site with information on how people could sign up to attend. In Table 1 is information on the number of times the consultation documents were downloaded.

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 1 - Frequency of downloads of the draft Kent Rail Strategy consultation materials and Rail summit invitation

| Consultation Document | Downloads |
|---|------------------|
| Draft Kent Rail Strategy 2021 - Word version (3.86MB) | 154 downloads |
| Draft Kent Rail Strategy 2021 - PDF version (2.88 MB) | 1512 downloads |
| 12th Rail Summit invitation - Word version (826KB) | 16 downloads |
| 12th Rail Summit invitation - PDF version (772KB) | 70 downloads |
| Consultation questionnaire - Word version (91KB) | 99 downloads |
| Equality Impact Assessment - Word version (54KB) | 16 downloads |
| Equality Impact Assessment - PDF version (535KB) | 61 downloads |

A press release was issued on the launch of the consultation and an email was sent to 2,140 people who had registered with KCC's consultation directory and expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultations regarding general interest and traffic, transport and roads. We shared the Kent Rail Strategy consultation on organic social media channels to increase awareness and engagement of the consultation. 11 posts were issued throughout the consultation period. The posts shared were seen by 47,800 people and generated 717 clicks to the Consultation Directory. The breakdown of all social media responses is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Engagement levels with social media posts advertising the draft Kent Rail Strategy consultation

| Media | Reach | Impressions | Clicks |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Facebook | 16,813 | | 222 |
| Twitter | | 27,093 | 427 |
| Linkedin | | 3,894 | 68 |
| Totals Shared | 47,800 | | 717 |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



The following timeline sets out the development process for the draft Kent Rail Strategy and public consultation as part of that:

- 15 September 2020 – draft rail strategy considered by KCC’s Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee
- 23 September 2020 – launch of public consultation
- 13 October 2020 – KCC annual rail summit webinar including presentation on draft rail strategy and further opportunity to participate in consultation
- 17 November 2020 – close of public consultation
- 30 November 2020 – completion of coding of consultation responses
- 11 December 2020 – completion of consideration of responses to inform development of the draft Kent Rail Strategy and the review and update of the EqIA.
- 15 January 2021 – final version of rail strategy, consultation report and EqIA to be published on KCC website for Cabinet meeting on Jan 25
- 25 January 2021 – Cabinet to consider rail strategy, consultation report and EqIA, and Members to be asked to adopt rail strategy as KCC policy
- 2 February 2021 – final date for call-in of Cabinet decision
- 9 February 2021 – planned adoption and publication on KCC website of Kent Rail Strategy 2021 as official KCC policy

Accessibility measures included ‘Alt Text’ to describe pictures, tables, and maps in the main strategy document, to assist consultees whose sight is impaired. All documents supporting the consultation were available in PDF and Word format, and anyone requesting a hard copy of the strategy and consultation questionnaire would have been sent these by post [there were no requests for hard copies by post]. Contact details were provided for how people could request consultation material in alternative formats or languages.

3. Consultation responses

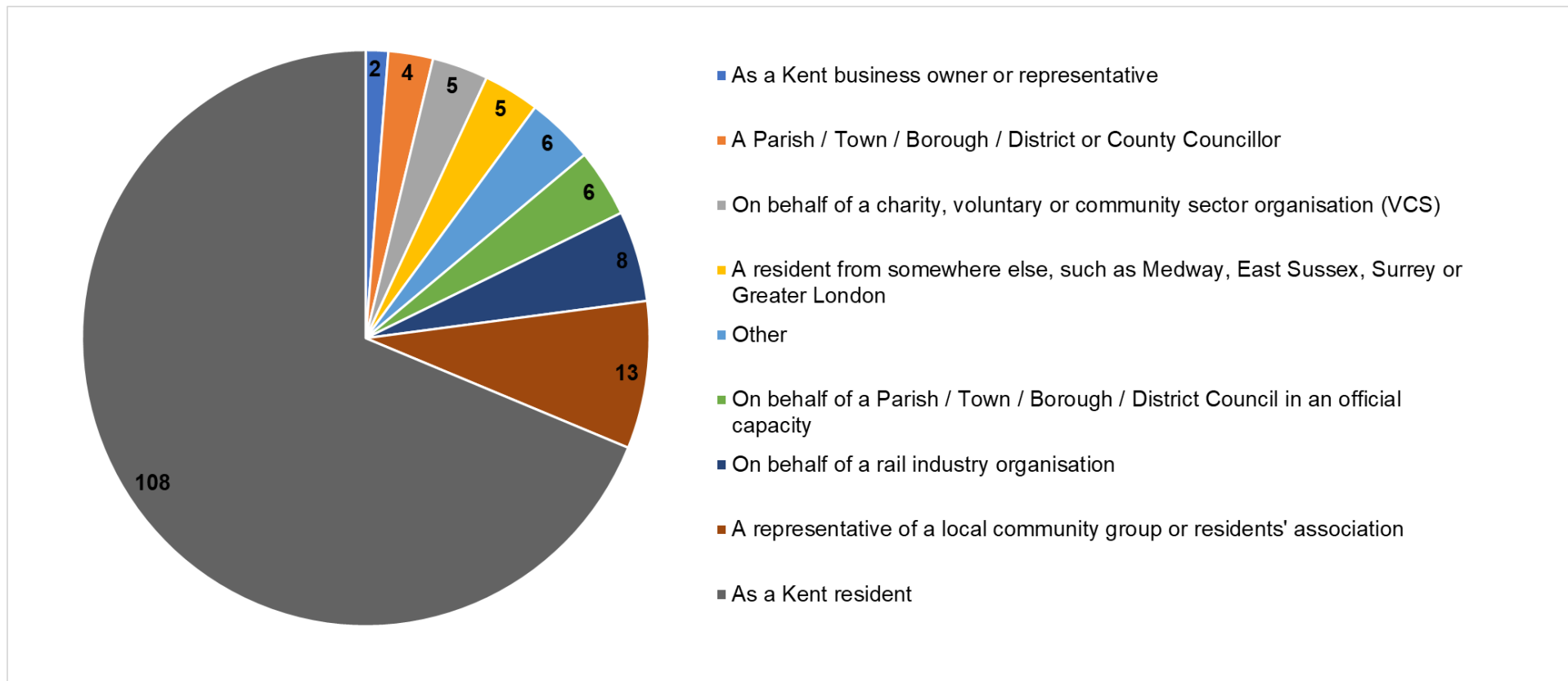
This section details the number of responses and comments for each of the questions about the draft Kent Rail Strategy. There was a total of 187 responses, of which 159 were online and 28 were by email. Not all the questions were answered by every respondent. The comments include those responses submitted through the online questionnaire and by stakeholders in free-form prose such as letters or emails. In total we have analysed 1,316 comments.

The draft Kent Rail Strategy received responses from a range of organisations as well as residents, as shown in

Figure 1.

The majority were residents of Kent. This split of responses by type of respondent was consistent across the different consultation questions, as at least 92% of the total number of respondents provided an answer to each of the consultation questions.

Figure 1 - Number of respondents replying as Kent residents or other

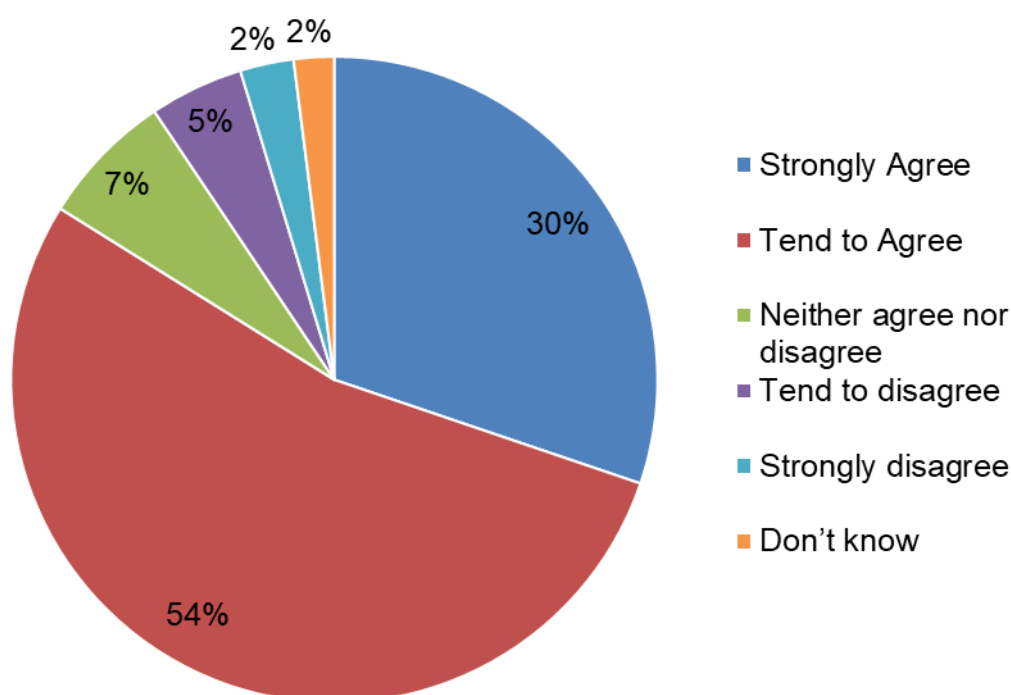


4. Kent Rail Strategy ambitions

Question 3 of the consultation asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the ambitions for the next South Eastern agreement as set out in the draft Kent Rail Strategy?'

We received 171 answers to this question, of which 147 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated ambitions is shown in Figure 2. Overall, there was very high support for the ambitions in the strategy, with 84% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. Just 7% stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree.

Figure 2 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's stated ambitions



Of the 147 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 25 themes were identified. The frequency of themed responses is shown in

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 3.

Table 3 - Frequency of responses to Question 3 by theme concerning the strategy's ambition

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Rail to reduce road congestion / car use | 16 | 9% |
| Pandemic has changed situation | 15 | 8% |
| Lower priced ticketing | 14 | 7% |
| More capacity needed / reduce crowding | 13 | 7% |
| Improved facilities at stations | 12 | 6% |
| Not enough ambition / does not go far enough / elements missing | 12 | 6% |
| Replace Networker fleet | 11 | 6% |
| More frequent trains needed | 11 | 6% |
| More freight / support freight traffic | 10 | 5% |
| Flexible ticketing | 9 | 5% |
| Improve High Speed services | 9 | 5% |
| Improved facilities for mobility impaired | 8 | 4% |
| Make journeys faster / reduce travel time | 7 | 4% |
| Improved cycling facilities | 6 | 3% |
| Support Kent to Gatwick service | 6 | 3% |
| Support Maidstone to City service | 6 | 3% |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



| | | |
|---|------------|----|
| New lines / routes needed / add to SE operator network | 5 | 3% |
| Improve travel to station / bus services / avoid car use to station / first & last mile | 4 | 2% |
| Electrify the rest of the network / parts of the network | 3 | 2% |
| Improve International services | 3 | 2% |
| New station(s) proposed | 2 | 1% |
| Concerns about funding / business case / deliverability | 2 | 1% |
| Supports connectivity to Abbey Wood (C2E) | 2 | 1% |
| Services have got worse | 1 | 1% |
| Supports devolution of metro routes | 1 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 188 | |

It is clear from the themed responses that respondents have been mindful of the context of Kent's rail network in the wider choice of transport in the County. In particular, respondents frequently agreed and cited the importance of rail for reducing car use and linked to this is frequent mention of 'Lower priced ticketing' – that fares needing to be addressed to make selection of rail over car travel more commonplace. Some of the comments concerning fares highlighted both how cost can be a barrier to use of the railways but also the opportunity it presents for increasing patronage during non-peak times of the day. For example:

“The strategy must focus on ways of growing passenger revenue from leisure and more occasional travel and on modal shift from car to public transport.”

“For people in poorer areas like Thanet, access to jobs further afield is a lifeline, but the present fare scales directly encourage workers to get into their cars, as they can travel substantially more cheaply by road...”

The most popular specific improvement addressed by the ambition ‘To establish the requirements for new fleets of rolling-stock in each sector to enable these service levels to be realised’, was replacement of the Networker fleet. Some responses gave specific reasons such as the lack of air conditioning on the current stock and the need for more standing space for the shorter journeys being made on metro routes.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was also often mentioned by respondents, however there were varying views on the impact, with some responses stating that it has changed the nature of commuting which will have a long term impact, whilst some responses refer to it as having a short term effect and that the strategy (as it explicitly sets out) must continue to plan for the long term and the recovery of rail use.

Four responses for the theme ‘Improve travel to station / bus services...’ also commented that the strategy for rail needs to look beyond travel on just the rail network and extend to also covering the means by which prospective passengers reach stations in the first place. They felt an integrated approach to transport was important, for example:

“The Society does not understand why you have concentrated on a Rail strategy when it would have been better to consider an integrated transport strategy taking into account bus services as well as roads”

KCC has an integrated transport plan, known as the Local Transport Plan. The responses and comments received from this consultation will be used both for the completion and adoption of the rail strategy and to help further shape and deliver Kent’s Local Transport Plan.

Some respondents felt the strategy should go further either in the ambition or in the detail and coverage of some topics e.g. freight and climate change. These responses came both from those who supported the strategy, or it was a stated reason for their not supporting the strategy, as shown below.

“Tend to agree. Reason: ...We believe, however, that in the light of KCC’s climate emergency declaration the strategy is not ambitious enough on sustainability...”

“Tend to disagree. Reason: While I agree with all four ambitions, there is one glaring omission and that is a reference to the need to significantly support and facilitate an increase in freight traffic in and across Kent...”

Respondents used the consultation to bring attention to additional improvements they felt should be made to Kent's national rail network (see themes 'New station(s) proposed' and 'New lines / routes needed...'). These improvements included:

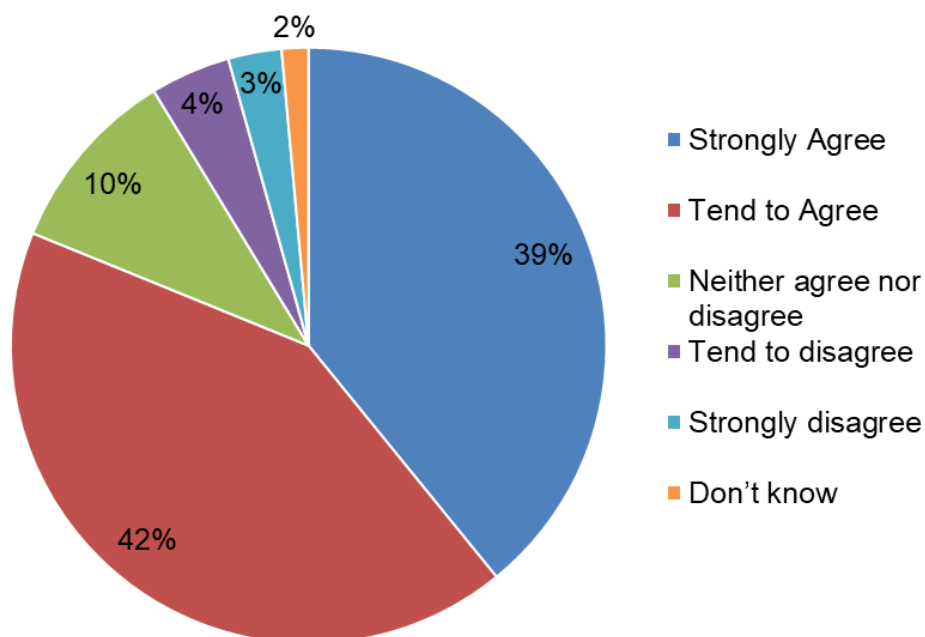
- A way to travel between Faversham and Ashford without having to change services and walk between Canterbury West and East stations.
- Improving the Tonbridge to Redhill line, such as by returning this line to South Eastern operations.
- Routing more Medway Valley line services to Tonbridge rather than Paddock Wood.
- Reposition stations to improve their access (particularly those in "awkward" locations outside towns).
- A High Speed 1 station near M20 junction 8 to serve Maidstone.

5. Rail policy

Question 4 asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for the Rail Policy in the Strategy?'

We received 166 answers to this question, of which 129 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions for the rail policy is shown in Figure 3. There was very high support for the ambitions, with 81% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. Just 7% stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. A further 10% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 3 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with the strategy's actions for the rail policy



Of the 129 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 26 themes were identified. The frequency of themed responses is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Frequency of responses to Question 4 by theme concerning the strategy's rail policy

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Improve travel to station / bus services / avoid car use to station / first & last mile | 19 | 13% |
| Lower priced ticketing | 17 | 12% |
| Flexible ticketing | 15 | 10% |
| Rail to reduce road congestion / car use | 10 | 7% |
| Improved facilities for mobility impaired | 9 | 6% |
| More freight / support freight traffic | 9 | 6% |
| Improved facilities at stations / staff stations | 8 | 6% |
| Reduction in carbon emissions | 7 | 5% |
| Not enough ambition / does not go far enough / elements missing | 7 | 5% |
| Pandemic has changed situation | 6 | 4% |
| New lines / routes needed / add to SE operator network | 6 | 4% |
| Improved cycling facilities | 4 | 3% |
| Improve High Speed services | 4 | 3% |
| Concerns about funding / business case / deliverability | 4 | 3% |
| Make journeys faster / reduce travel time | 3 | 2% |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



| | | |
|--|------------|----|
| Supports Maidstone to City service | 2 | 1% |
| Improve facilities on trains | 2 | 1% |
| Electrify the rest of the network / parts of the network | 2 | 1% |
| More frequent trains needed | 2 | 1% |
| Services have got worse | 2 | 1% |
| Improve International services | 2 | 1% |
| London Transport Fare Integration | 1 | 1% |
| More capacity needed / reduce crowding | 1 | 1% |
| New station(s) proposed | 1 | 1% |
| Opposed to rationalisation with TfL rail services | 1 | 1% |
| Supports concessions over franchising | 1 | 1% |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>145</i> | |

The most frequent theme was ‘Improve travel to station / bus services...’, which likely reflects respondent’s awareness that KCC is the statutory transport authority whose responsibility and direct impact lies with local transport that can improve access to rail. For example:

“...KCC needs to acknowledge its own part in taking actions to dissuade private motor travel and provide safe routes for people walking and cycling.”

Respondents cited the need to improve:

- Integrated cycle network with rail stations and the need for stations and on trains to be accommodating of cycles.
- The need for rail and bus services to be timed to coincide with one another, to avoid missed connections.
- Smart ticketing or other ticketing initiatives to enable ease of interchange and payment.
- The physical location of stations and the ease or otherwise that creates with integrating with the wider transport network.
- Community Rail Partnerships supporting or leading work in improving first and last mile journeys.

The importance of ticketing, both in terms of cost and flexibility of use on rail and other modes is demonstrated by the two themes next most frequently cited by respondents – ‘Lower priced ticketing’ and ‘Flexible ticketing’. The cost of tickets was particularly cited as a cause of concern amongst some respondents, additional to those instances cited in response to Question 3. For example:

“Fares are grotesquely expensive. It is not just special deals we need to attract people to Kent with. We badly need reasonable commuting fares too. If fares were lower more people would use the trains more often....”

Less frequent themes, but still relatively frequent compared to the 11 themes that had either one or two responses, include ‘More freight / support freight traffic’ and ‘Rail to reduce road congestion / car use’. Both themes were cited in single responses, where responses were promoting increased use of rail for the specific stated purpose to

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



reduce road freight. It is clear from these responses that the sensitivity and experience of the impacts of road freight is particularly felt in parts of Kent towards the Port of Dover. For example:

“Kent already has significant freight movement by road to the various ports and the channel tunnel. Much of this can be reduced with a positive strategy to encourage modal shift towards rail freight.”

“Modal shift, particularly for freight is essential, given the potential for post Brexit chaos.”

Associated with modal shift was a relatively frequent citing of the need or desire to reduce carbon emissions, with seven instances recorded across responses. Whilst some responses to the themes concerning reducing road traffic and increasing rail freight also cited reducing carbon, some responses solely responded on carbon, with responses feeling that rail should “play a primary role” in work towards decarbonisation.

The Kent Rail Strategy policy of “...working towards an accessible rail network in Kent” generated a frequent number of responses against the theme ‘Improved facilities for mobility impaired’ and ‘Improved facilities at stations / staff stations’. In addition, some comments highlighted that an accessible rail network needs to be one that is not only addressing the physical needs of passengers. For example:

“I have a friend with a 20-year old son who has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and can only get around in his large electric wheelchair. There are some stations which he would currently be unable to visit...”

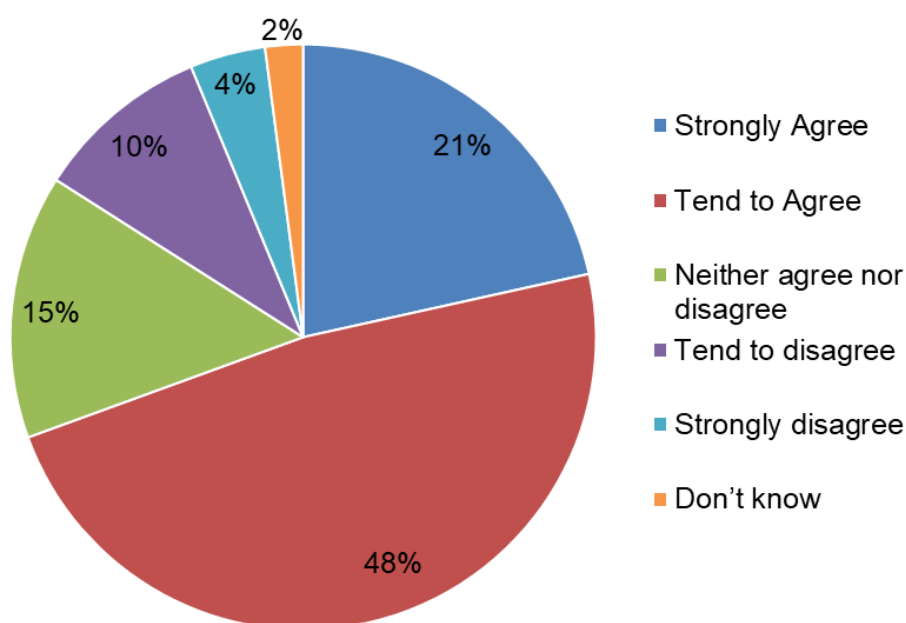
“A focus on the passenger is key, and accessibility in both physical disability terms and as well as neurodiversity needs should be considered.”

6. Fares policy

Question 5 asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for the Fares Policy in the Strategy?'

We received 167 answers to this question, of which 128 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions for the fares policy is shown in Figure 4. There was very high support for the actions, with 69% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. A total of 15% stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. A further 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 4 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for the fares policy



Of the 128 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 23 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 5.

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 5 - Frequency of responses to Question 5 by theme concerning the strategy's fares policy

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Flexible season tickets | 42 | 20% |
| Smart Ticketing | 28 | 13% |
| Reduce fares / fares are too expensive | 26 | 12% |
| Lower fares will increase usage / modal shift | 24 | 11% |
| Not using rail as fares too high / car or coach is cheaper | 14 | 7% |
| Fares are confusing / Finding best deal is difficult / should all be available at same place | 14 | 7% |
| CPI rather than RPI increases | 13 | 6% |
| Supports London zonal fares extended to Kent | 5 | 2% |
| Fares do not represent value | 5 | 2% |
| Pandemic effects / working from home has saved people money and shown fares are expensive | 5 | 2% |
| Retain paying by cash | 4 | 2% |
| High Speed should not be charged a premium / premium should be lowered | 4 | 2% |
| Pandemic has changed situation | 4 | 2% |
| Subsidise rail fares / more concessionary fares | 4 | 2% |
| Scholars' season tickets | 3 | 1% |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



| | | |
|--|------------|----|
| Combined bus / rail tickets | 3 | 1% |
| Opposes London Transport Fare Integration | 3 | 1% |
| Concern about rail fares for low income users / users with less flexibility on times of travel | 3 | 1% |
| Rail fares should not be paid for by non-rail users / should continue to rise above inflation | 2 | 1% |
| Rail car park charges need addressing | 2 | 1% |
| Concerns about funding / business case / deliverability | 2 | 1% |
| Improve travel to station / bus services / avoid car use to station / first & last mile | 2 | 1% |
| Not enough ambition | 1 | 0% |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>213</i> | |

By far the most frequent response was respondents citing the need for flexible season tickets. This was followed by 'Smart Ticketing' and then 'Reduce fares / fares are too expensive'. Often respondents citing the need for flexible tickets were either referring to Smart Ticketing as a means of achieving flexibility, or because flexible tickets could be a way of reducing fares because they are too expensive. For example:

"More recognition of the effect of costs on commuting from the coast to London. More emphasis on flexible ticketing for the shorter working week / working from home in the future."

"Due to the Covid situation and more people working from home, my suggestion is a super flexible part time annual season ticket is for a set number of days per year that can be used for both commuting and leisure purposes at the weekends too. would be useful here too."

As highlighted in responses to Question 3, respondents also took the opportunity in response to Question 5 to reiterate that they find fares expensive. Furthermore, respondents whose comments were included in the theme 'Reduce fares / fares are too expensive' often also made comments that were included in the theme 'Lower fares will increase usage / modal shift'. The impact of fares is further highlighted by the frequent responses against 'Not using rail as fares too high / car or coach is cheaper'. The responses below indicate the challenge that the rail network must overcome advantages of car use, particularly given the significant drop in rail and return to car travel that has occurred in the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It is blindingly obvious that rail fares are too high compared with Europe. I would never dream of not using my car whilst the fares are so high. Now that working from home is more common, many folks are saving £5000 to £7000 per annum by home working."

"Fares from east Kent are already too high especially at peak time and despite off peak and rail car reductions, offer low value for money...It is imperative if we are to encourage people off the roads to ensure there is a significant price differential with road travel."

Respondents supported many of the actions proposed for the rail fares policy. However, some elements were opposed, even if it did not lead to a strongly or tend to disagree response. This was notable on the proposal to extend Transport for London (TfL) fare zone to Sevenoaks. For example:

“Strongly disagree. Reason: You are aiming to extend the London zonal fares to include parts of North Kent – this is extremely unfair and will result in increased costs for rail users. We are NOT in London and should NOT be subjected to their zonal charges.”

“Tend to agree. Reason: Though I agree with the majority [of the policy], I disagree with any move to expand London Transport zones outside of London. If Sevenoaks wants to pay London Transport fares then Sevenoaks should become a London Borough and pay tax to the GLA.”

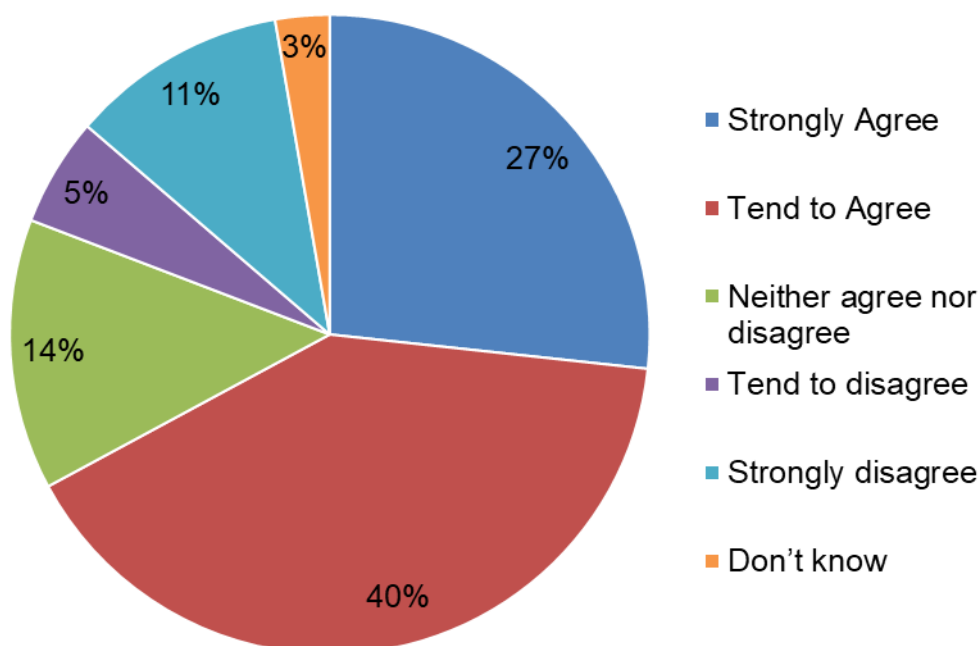
There were overall slightly more responses recorded against code ‘Supports London Zonal fares extended to Kent’, at five instances, than against code ‘Opposes London Transport Fares integration’, at three instances. It should be noted though that some of the supportive comments were on the basis that London zonal fares be introduced across more of or the whole of Kent.

7. Rail infrastructure enhancements

Question 6 asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for the Rail Infrastructure Enhancements in the Strategy?'

We received 162 answers to this question, of which 142 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions for rail enhancements are shown in Figure 5. There was very high support for the actions in the strategy, with 67% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. 16% stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. 14% stated they neither agreed nor disagreed. This question had the highest level of disagree responses of all the questions, albeit only by 1%.

Figure 5 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with Strategy's actions for Infrastructure Enhancement



Of the 142 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 18 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 6.

Table 6 - Frequency of responses to Question 6 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for infrastructure enhancement

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Not enough routes covered / additional routes proposed for upgrade / new lines / freight improvements | 38 | 22% |
| Support new rail infrastructure | 32 | 19% |
| Support new power systems | 25 | 15% |
| Supports new routes proposed | 17 | 10% |
| Stations need refurbishment / improving | 12 | 7% |
| Concerns about funding enhancements / cost impacting fares / business case | 9 | 5% |
| Improvements will increase passenger numbers | 8 | 5% |
| Opposes new services proposed | 6 | 3% |
| Oppose new station(s) | 6 | 3% |
| Address infrastructure / services to / from stations | 5 | 3% |
| Support new stations | 4 | 2% |
| Line is slow / unpleasant / increase speeds | 3 | 2% |
| Hydrogen power proposed | 2 | 1% |
| Power upgrade / replace DC with OHLE | 1 | 1% |
| Address level crossings | 1 | 1% |

| | | |
|---|------------|----|
| Pandemic changed situation / reduces need for infrastructure improvements | 1 | 1% |
| More ambition needed | 1 | 1% |
| Fares are more important | 1 | 1% |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>172</i> | |

With 38 instances of recording across responses, the theme 'Not enough routes covered / additional routes proposed for upgrade / new lines / freight improvements' was the most frequent. This reflects that in response to the proposed actions in the strategy, respondents took the opportunity to propose their own improvements to infrastructure. Frequent proposals featured include the following:

- Cuxton chord – a new line (forming a new curve or chord between two existing lines) between the Medway Valley line and the Chatham mainline to enable Medway towns to Gatwick services.
- Canterbury West northern entrance to Roper Road and associated congestion relief at the station.
- Kent Essex Tram
- Gravesend to Hoo Peninsula new rail line and stations / turnback siding at Gravesend
- Tunbridge Wells to Lewes line (reopening a former line known also as the Wealden line)

Respondents frequently supported the infrastructure enhancements being proposed in the strategy, and the improvements these would bring to train services. Notable is the frequency of support for power improvements, often cited in respect of the Ashford to Hastings Marshlink proposal. Support for new routes frequently cited the Maidstone to City of London services proposed but not yet delivered as part of Thameslink, and the Tonbridge to Reading route.

There were nine responses regarding ‘Concerns about funding enhancements / cost impacting fares...’. Most comments highlighted an understanding that funds would be challenging to obtain, with a lower number of comments highlighting that some of the proposal are likely to be marginal in terms of business case and or feasibility such as southern link to Ebbsfleet or the Canterbury chord. The Canterbury chord’s challenges are also already acknowledged in the draft Kent Rail Strategy. As mentioned, there was the highest level of disagreement to this part of the strategy. Two themes accounted for six instances of disagreement ‘Oppose new station(s)’ and ‘Opposes new services proposed’. These themes included mentions of Thanet Parkway station and reducing High Speed services to Deal, Walmer and Sandwich. Some of the consultation respondents highlighted their concerns about Deal services as follows:

“I’m here to beg you to not remove Deal from your morning High Speed services”

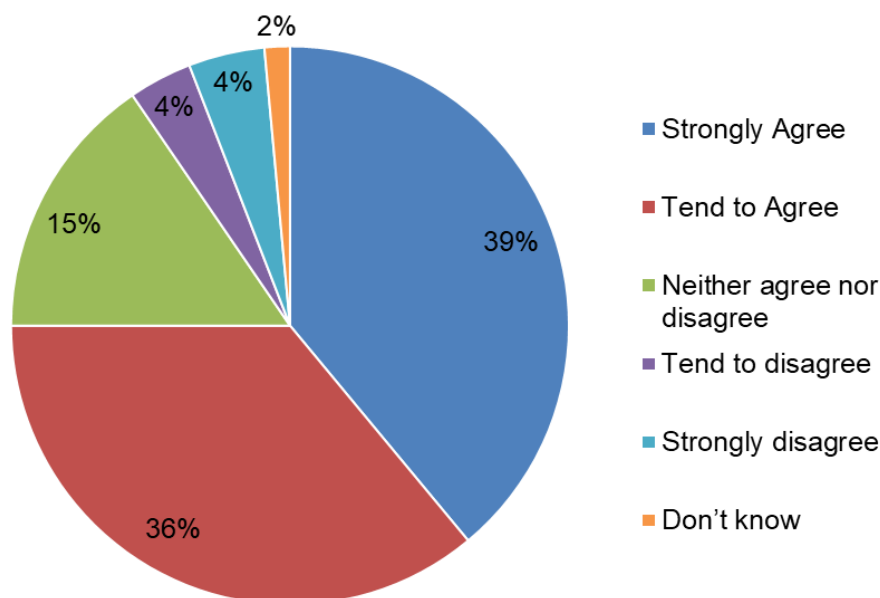
“Although East Kent stations (Deal, Walmer and Sandwich) are currently served with 2 HS trains per hour in the peak morning commute, the evening commute is only served by 1 HS train per hour and many commuters / tourists were hoping for an increase in peak service...This proposal does not feel like progress”

8. Rolling stock improvements

Question 7 of the consultation asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for the Rolling Stock Improvements in the Strategy?'

We received 160 answers to this question, of which 116 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions is shown in Figure 6. There was very high support for the actions, with 75% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. 8% stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. 15% stated they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 6 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for rolling stock



Of the 116 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 17 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 - Frequency of responses to Question 7 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for rolling stock

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Supports new Metro rolling-stock | 36 | 24% |
| Supports new High Speed rolling-stock | 28 | 19% |
| Supports new Mainline rolling-stock | 20 | 13% |
| Better service / encourages use of trains | 14 | 9% |
| Trains need to be accessible to all users | 13 | 9% |
| Interior of trains needs improving / functioning facilities / doors | 7 | 5% |
| Rolling stock already good | 6 | 4% |
| Freight stock improvements | 5 | 3% |
| Unsuitable trains for route / distance of journey | 4 | 3% |
| Air-conditioning needed / heating needed | 3 | 2% |
| Concern about funding improvements / fares having to rise to fund improvements | 3 | 2% |
| Trains / seats needed to be more comfortable | 3 | 2% |
| Use hydrogen powered trains | 2 | 1% |
| Environmentally friendly / better | 2 | 1% |
| Convert mainline stock for HS line use | 1 | 1% |
| Modern stock less reliable / fragile | 1 | 1% |
| Opposes procurement of class 800/801/802 stock | 1 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 149 | |

Support for each of the actions proposed for mainline, metro and high-speed rolling stock were the three most frequently themed comments amongst the responses. Support for the metro stock replacement was the most frequently themed comment, likely reflecting the age of the stock and its relatively less modern interior and facilities compared to the high speed and mainline stock. The comment below illustrates the views of some respondents with regards to the metro rolling stock:

“The old metro rolling stock is appalling and unfit for purpose and needs to be replaced.”

‘Supports new high-speed rolling-stock’ was the second highest theme. This may reflect the comprehensive proposals the strategy sets out for maximising the extent and frequency of high speed services across Kent and the reliance therefore on there being sufficient high speed rolling stock. It is important to note however that some confusion about the proposal being about replacing the whole high-speed fleet was expressed in response to the consultation. In addition, several respondents highlighted concerns about the Class 800/801 stock as follows:

“Class 800/801 rolling stock are not seen as appropriate. These vehicles are 26m (or in the case of EMT variants 24m) long and would not fit the majority of the SE routes, thus reducing the option for diversionary routing...Provision of a 395 variant...is seen as a more appropriate strategy and give a greater flexibility.”

Concerning mainline stock, respondents were supportive on the basis that extra capacity could be provided and more frequent trains. Some respondents felt that the mainline Electrostar stock was due mid-life refurbishment:

“The Electrostar trains which I have used for a number of years definitely need refurbishing...”

Aside from support for the main proposals in the strategy, the next most frequent themed comments were 'Better service / encourages use of trains' and 'Trains need to be accessible to all users'. These responses reflect similar sentiment given in response to Question 3 concerning the strategy's ambitions – specifically that to get more passengers onto the railway services need to be improved in a variety of ways. Respondents suggestions for improving accessibility include:

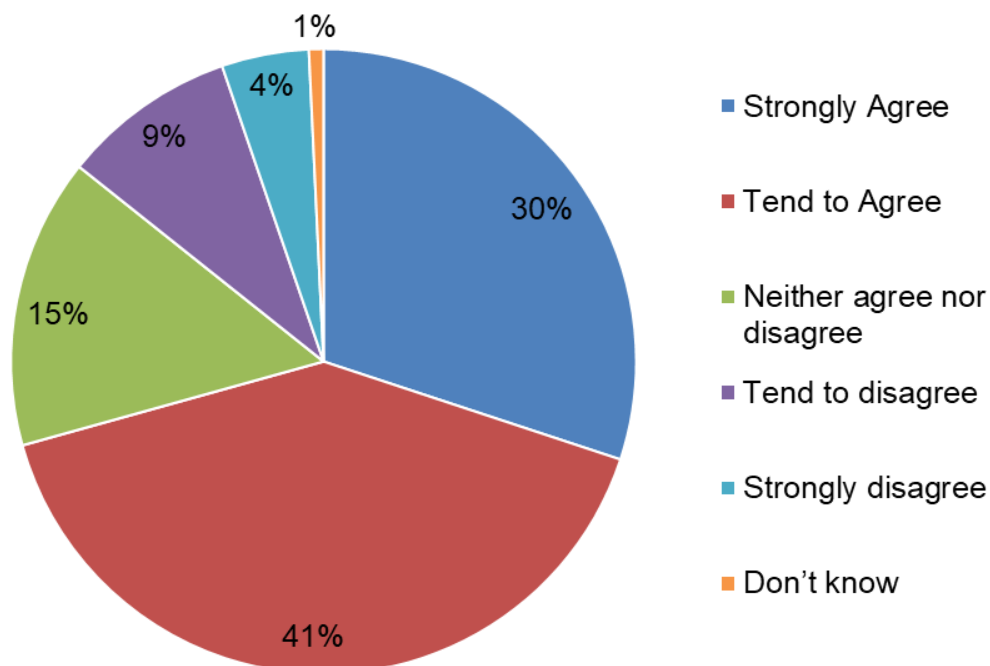
- More space on trains for disability equipment such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters.
- Improved access and on-board bike spaces.
- A cycle carriage.
- Space for prams and pushchairs.
- Boarding and alighting should not need a ramp.
- Reference to copying continental trains which provide in some instances a large open multi-use half carriage that can accommodate a mixture of users with equipment and standing passengers at peak times.

9. Passenger services

Question 8 of the consultation asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for Passenger Services in the Strategy?'

We received 166 answers to this question, of which 125 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions for passenger services is shown in Figure 7. There was very high support for the actions in the strategy, with 71% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. 13% stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. 15% stated they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 7 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for passenger services



Of the 125 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 14 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in Table 8.

Table 8 - Frequency of responses to Question 8 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for passenger services

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Support new service to Gatwick and Reading | 20 | 16% |
| Support increased capacity | 19 | 15% |
| Proposed additional service / route | 19 | 15% |
| Support new Maidstone East to City service | 13 | 11% |
| Support High Speed service expansion | 10 | 8% |
| Support Marshlink HS service | 9 | 7% |
| Not sure about new station / not support new station / services to serve new station | 8 | 7% |
| Support faster journey times | 6 | 5% |
| Better services will encourage more rail travel / support tourism | 6 | 5% |
| Not sure if strategy ambitious enough / does not go far enough | 3 | 2% |
| Trains are slow / delayed on route | 3 | 2% |
| Services should be timed to fit with schools / interchange between routes | 3 | 2% |
| Service improvements support economy | 2 | 2% |
| Off peak freight services should not be lower priority than passenger services | 1 | 1% |
| Market Kent rail network | 1 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 123 | |

There were frequent statements of support for specific service improvements – particularly Gatwick and Reading, Maidstone East and the City and the Marshlink services. Examining the detail of the comments shows that whilst support is expressed, some respondents qualified or suggested amendments and were included in the theme ‘Proposed additional service / route’. For example:

- Routing the Gatwick and Reading service along the Medway Valley line to the Medway towns.
- In what could be viewed as a first step on the migration of services to a full Gatwick and Reading route, extending Medway Valley line services to Tonbridge to enable connections to the Tonbridge to Redhill service.
- Viewing Maidstone services to the City on Thameslink as the priority over services as far as Rainham, instead routing the latter to Hoo Peninsula or using the paths on the Thameslink core for Maidstone instead.

In addition, a range of specific service and wider infrastructure proposals were suggested to improve the passenger services on offer in Kent, such as:

- Re-aligning the Medway Valley line to enable a single Maidstone station serving the mainline and Medway Valley line.
- Avoiding any reduction of services to the Medway towns, Deal or Whitstable
- Construction of a new High-Speed 1 station on the High-Speed 1 line to serve Maidstone
- A new line on the Hoo Peninsula with a station at Sharnal Street / All Hallows / Thamesport.
- Improvements along the North Kent line to connect to Abbey Wood, including but not limited to the consideration of Elizabeth line (Crossrail) services.
- Brighton Main Line 2 (BML2) – a proposal for a new line from Brighton to London via Uckfield and Oxted.
- A new service between Dover to Canterbury running via Minster.
- Improvements to mainline capacity rather than metro services to Tunbridge Wells.
- Reinstate the Tunbridge Wells to Lewes line.

Linked to some of the proposals above, particularly avoiding service reductions are responses with comments recorded for the theme ‘Not sure about new station / do not support new station / services to serve new station’. Responses were concerned that new service provisions to serve stations such as Thanet Parkway and Westenhanger for Otterpool Park Garden Village would leave stations such as Deal worse off.

One response, themed as ‘Market Kent rail network’, focused on the marketing of passenger services and the impact this could have in making them easier to use and therefore potentially increase patronage:

“Kent’s rail network should be treated and marketed as an entity in itself, as a proud Kent asset – and not just as a stub of London’s commuter transport system. The network should be given its own identity, and its rail map should be designed and presented in an easy to understand presentation. An example is Scotland where the “Scotrail” brand...is used as part of the transformation of rail’s offering...”

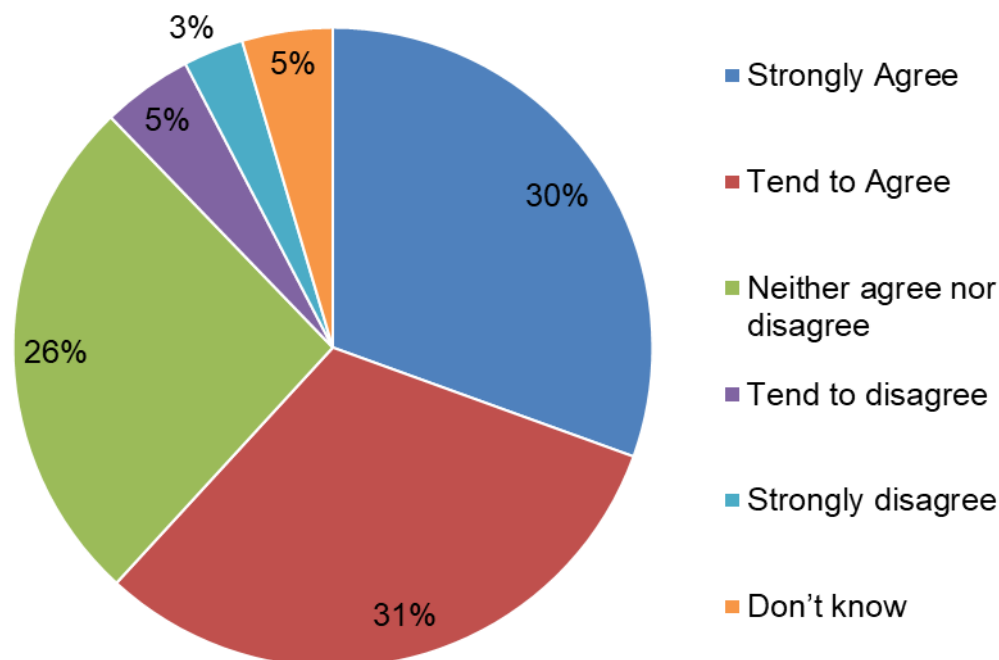
10. Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)

Question 9 of the consultation asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for Community Rail Partnerships in the Strategy?'

We received 162 answers to this question, of which 97 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions for Community Rail Partnerships is shown in Figure 8. There was very high support for the actions in the Strategy, with 61% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. 8% stated either that they strongly or tend to disagree. 26% stated they neither agreed nor disagreed.

This question had the highest rate of neither agree nor disagree and don't know responses (5%), This suggests that 3 in 10 respondents potentially have a low awareness of CRPs and the work they do and therefore did not or could not form an opinion to this question.

Figure 8 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with strategy's actions for Community Rail Partnerships



Of the 97 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 13 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 - Frequency of responses to Question 9 by theme concerning the strategy's Community Rail Partnerships (CRP) proposals

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Support CRP funding | 25 | 35% |
| Support new CRP routes | 13 | 18% |
| CRPs work when / help bring all parties / people / communities together | 10 | 14% |
| CRPs improve the potential of routes / use of lines / quality of stations | 10 | 14% |
| Already involved / part of a CRP | 4 | 6% |
| CRPs obtain advocacy | 2 | 3% |
| Against CRP funding | 1 | 1% |
| Thinks CRPs should cover all public transport | 1 | 1% |
| CRPs should seek private funding / support | 1 | 1% |
| CRPs will not work in my area | 1 | 1% |
| CRPs are talking shops | 1 | 1% |
| Rail companies should focus on other groups e.g. Active Travel groups, as well | 1 | 1% |
| CRPs vary in their effectiveness | 1 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 71 | |

There were frequent statements of support for CRPs – with 25 instances of support making it the most frequent theme. In addition, there was also support expressed for new or expanded CRP routes, including:

- Dover to Faversham
- Tonbridge to Ashford
- Swale CRP expand to include Selling, Faversham, Teynham, Sittingbourne and Newington.
- Brighton Main Line
- Medway to Dover / Thanet

Respondents also took the opportunity to highlight their perceived benefits of CRPs. Comments coded against codes ‘CRPs improve the potential of routes...’ and ‘CRPs work when / help bring all parties / people / communities together’ were the next two most frequent types of comments. These highlight that generally respondents have a positive impression and view of CRPs. Supportive statements include the following:

“CRPs are a vital resource in developing the potential of routes covered.”

“Increased financial support and promotion of CRPs would assist them greatly in publicising and encouraging travel on the less used lines.”

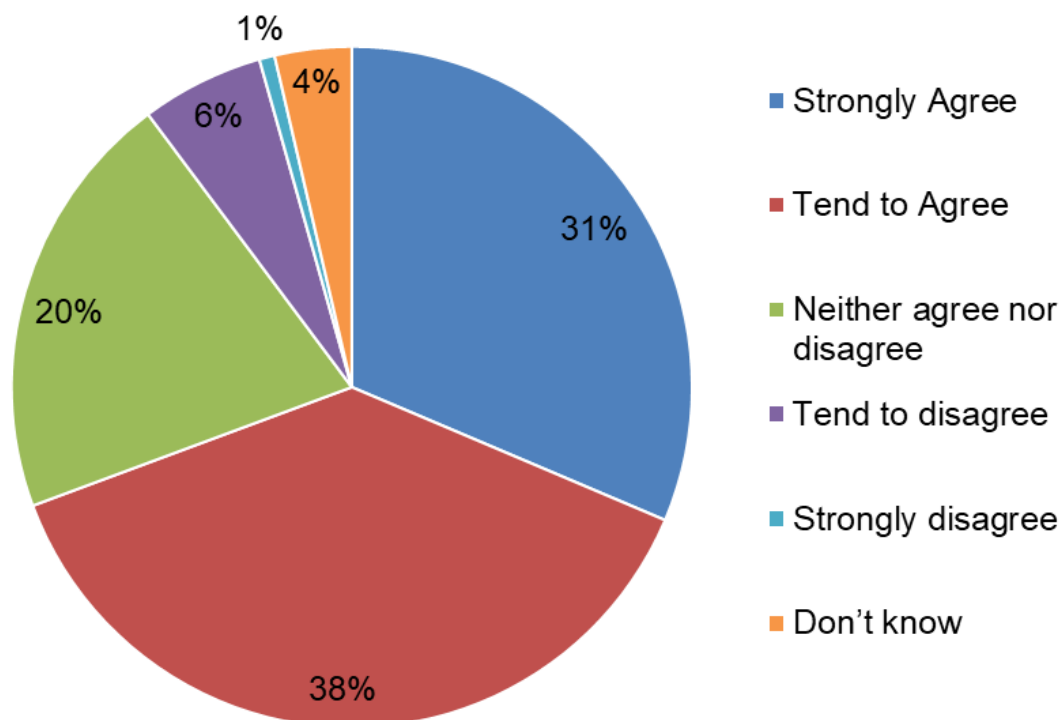
There was only a very low level of opposition or negative sentiment expressed towards CRPs, with only two instances coded against ‘CRPs are a talking shop’ and ‘Against CRP funding’, with the response coded to the latter clarifying that they felt it was questionable to spend capital funds on stations used by “very few passengers”.

11. Rail freight provision

Question 10 of the consultation asked, 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for Rail Freight Provision in the Strategy?'

We received 162 answers to this question, of which 116 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the Strategy's stated ambitions is shown in Figure 9. There was very high support for the ambitions in the Strategy, with 69% of total responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. A total of 7% of responses stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. A further 20% of responses stated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 4% don't know.

Figure 9 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with Strategy's actions for Rail Freight Provision



As with CRPs, the higher level of respondents having no opinion in agreement or disagreement or that don't know may reflect that rail freight is more niche and not within the interests of most everyday passengers using the railway. Nonetheless, the total level of response to the question is commensurate with other parts of the consultation demonstrating that respondents welcomed the opportunity to express views on the matter of freight.

Only one respondent strongly disagreed with the Rail Freight Provision section of the Strategy, on the basis that the priority should be the introduction of the Maidstone to City Thameslink service. Of the 116 responses providing a comment of reason, a total of 15 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in *Table 10*.

Table 10 - Frequency of responses to Question 10 by theme concerning the Strategy's Rail Freight Provision Proposals

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Support more freight on railway | 47 | 30% |
| Getting freight off roads is good / sensible / good for environment | 42 | 27% |
| More solutions needed / further options proposed | 15 | 10% |
| Channel tunnel route should not stop at Barking (Essex) / channel tunnel / HS1 should be used more | 10 | 6% |
| Freight should not affect passenger services / use quieter sections of the rail network | 9 | 6% |
| Rail freight needs to be affordable / needs right prices | 7 | 4% |
| Neutral about more freight on railway | 6 | 4% |
| Understands there are clearance / gauge constraints | 6 | 4% |

| | | |
|--|------------|----|
| Concern about freight traffic affecting residents along lines | 4 | 3% |
| Support freight but not diesel Locomotives / prefer electric | 3 | 2% |
| Subsidise / incentivise rail freight | 2 | 1% |
| More freight on the railways makes railways more cost effective / economic | 2 | 1% |
| Switching to rail freight needs to happen sooner | 1 | 1% |
| Should be more rail freight from Kent's docks | 1 | 1% |
| Address white-van freight as priority over container freight | 1 | 1% |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>156</i> | |

The coding of the responses shows that comments were coded most frequently against two codes – ‘Support more freight on the railway’ and ‘Getting freight off roads is good / sensible / good for environment’, with these two codes accounting for a total of 89 comments coded out of the total of 156 or 57%.

It is notable that the importance of freight for modal shift is so often cited given Kent’s challenges with road freight traffic routing to and from the Port of Dover. This is borne out by some of the comments as follows:

“Having hundreds of trucks driving up the M20 and M2 all the time is terrible for pollution and congestion”

“The likelihood of lorry chaos in Dover and the surrounding areas is looming large...so the more lorries we can get off the roads will be a great help and benefit to people’s health both mental and physical”

Respondents also commented that freight should not affect passenger services or be minimised in that respect by using quieter sections of the rail network. Suggestions were to avoid peak hours or undertake infrastructure investment so they could use quieter lines during the day. For all comments coded on this matter, they were made by respondents supportive or neither agree nor disagree with the principle of rail freight.

Some concern was expressed by respondents that rail freight is held back by its financial viability. A total of 9 comments were coded against 'Rail freight needs to be affordable / needs right prices' or 'Subsidise / incentivise rail freight'. There is a recognition therefore that, like concerns about the cost of fares for passengers on the railway, access charges for rail freight need to be addressed. For example:

"We have far too many lorries on our roads, many of their loads would be better transported by train if the tariffs were reasonable...Rail must compete with road and air travel in every aspect"

"Greater use of HS1 by freight should be a key objective. At present many freight trains would run most efficiently on HS1, where spare capacity is available but...freight operators regard using HS1 as too expensive"

Respondents also reflected on why more freight on the rail network in Kent may be difficult to achieve – six comments were coded against code 'Understands there are clearance / gauge constraints'. To improve rail freight routes and overcome some of these challenges, some new infrastructure proposals were suggested including:

- A third tunnel bored for a rail line as part of the Lower Thames Crossing road tunnel project.
- Removing the current terminus at Barking for High Speed line freight and making it capable of onwards movements.
- Linking HS1 to HS2 north of King's Cross St Pancras to enable high speed line freight to continue to the midlands and north.
- 3rd rail electrification of the Hastings to Ashford Marshlink for freight to route to Southampton Port.
- More freight handling terminals, acknowledging the challenging planning process they tend to face.

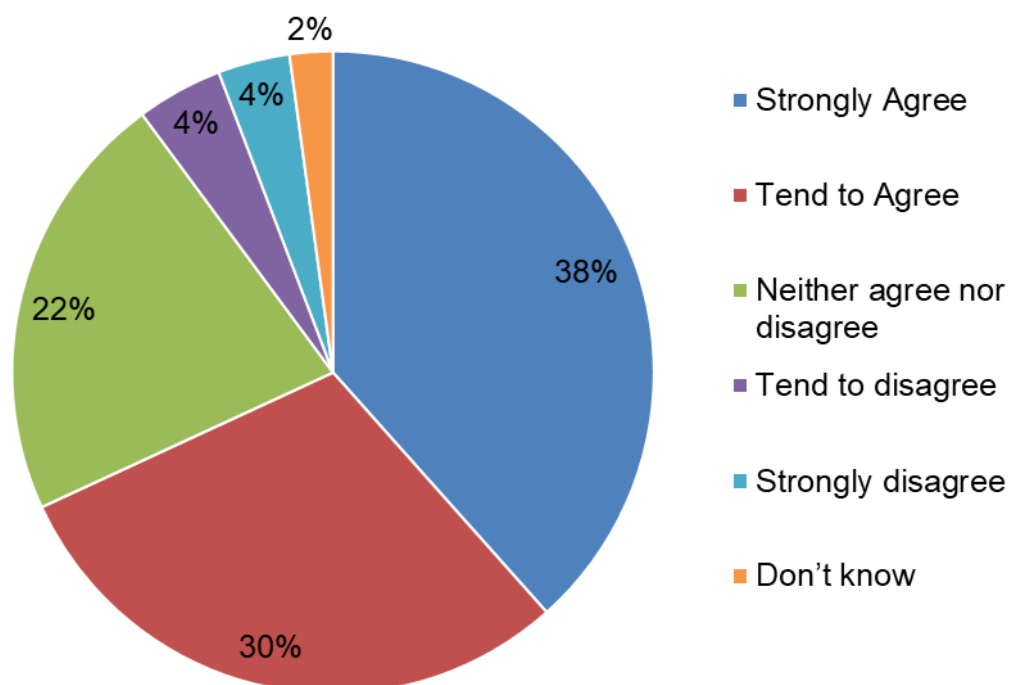
12. International rail services

Question 11 asked 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the recommended actions for International Rail Services in the Strategy?'

We received 160 answers to this question, of which 112 took the opportunity to also give a reason or make a comment. The results concerning the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the strategy's stated actions for International Rail services is shown in Figure 10. There was very high support for the actions, with 68% of responses either strongly agreeing or tending to agree. 8% of responses stated either that they strongly or tended to disagree. 22% stated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 2% don't know.

Despite the relatively high volume of respondents stating neither agree nor disagree, a review of the specific comments made by these respondents shows that several were supportive of restoring and increasing the range of international services through Kent.

Figure 10 - Frequency of response agreeing or disagreeing with the strategy's proposed actions for International Rail services



Of the 112 responses providing a comment or reason, a total of 16 themes were identified. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 - Frequency of responses to Question 11 by theme concerning the strategy's proposed actions for International Rail services

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Support increase in Eurostar services in Kent | 58 | 45% |
| Prefer Eurostar to Gatwick / Heathrow / reduce Air travel reliance / better for environment | 11 | 9% |
| Ashford is easy to reach via road / domestic rail, for onwards Eurostar travel / avoids London travel | 10 | 8% |
| Stop more Amsterdam services | 9 | 7% |
| Eurostar stopping services important / essential for Kent economy | 8 | 6% |
| Run service to other new destinations | 6 | 5% |
| International travel is important / essential / more destination choice is better | 6 | 5% |
| More services to Lille and Brussels | 4 | 3% |
| International tourism opportunity from Eurostar needs to be exploited | 4 | 3% |
| Owed International services at Ashford | 3 | 2% |
| Strategy needs more focus on Ebbsfleet / North Kent | 2 | 2% |
| Run service terminating at Calais | 2 | 2% |
| Not clear what commercial issues are preventing stopping services in Kent | 2 | 2% |

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Against increase in Eurostar services in Kent | 1 | 1% |
| Neutral about Eurostar services in Kent | 1 | 1% |
| Make purchase of tickets easier (e.g. Post Office via cash) | 1 | 1% |
| <i>TOTAL:</i> | 128 | |

'Support increase in Eurostar services in Kent' accounted for 45% of comments. The next closest theme provided insight for why respondents support Eurostar services including that it is cheaper and more convenient than Air travel and that Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations are easy to travel to, particularly Ashford given its own local radial domestic rail network to the north, south, east and west as well as excellent road connections.

Similarly some comments were coded against themes highlighting the impact of Eurostar services in Kent with a total of 18 comments across the themes 'Eurostar stopping services are important / essential for Kent economy', 'International travel is important...' and 'International tourism opportunity from Eurostar needs to be exploited'. Respondents commented on the impact on the economy from Eurostar services, as shown in the following example:

"Good rail links with mainland Europe are vital for both business and leisure travel and we believe Kent must maintain and expand these post-Brexit. For visitor destinations like Ramsgate, these links are particularly important..."

A small number of comments were recorded stating that the strategy is overly focused on Ashford International at the expense of Ebbsfleet International, given the latter's similarly high growth ambition for new jobs and homes, connectivity improvements and the proposed leisure resort at Swanscombe Peninsula.

13. Any other comments about the draft Kent Rail Strategy

Question 12 asked 'Do you have any other comments on the draft Kent Rail Strategy?'

We received 129 answers to this question. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in Table 12.

Table 12 - Frequency of responses to Question 13 by theme concerning any other comments respondents had on the draft Kent Rail Strategy

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Well written / good / positive strategy / welcome consultation | 13 | 10% |
| Lower fares / more concessionary fares | 10 | 8% |
| Improve station security / facilities | 9 | 7% |
| Onward bus connections / first & last mile / walking cycling to stations important / improve | 8 | 6% |
| Stop services at more stations | 7 | 5% |
| Supports making service easier for disabled users/ older passengers / accessibility | 7 | 5% |
| Concern about funding delivery of strategy | 6 | 5% |
| Strategy not ambitious enough / need integrated transport strategy | 6 | 5% |
| Covid changed circumstances | 6 | 5% |
| Supports Ashford Marshlink | 6 | 5% |
| More flexible fares | 5 | 4% |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



| | | |
|--|------------|----|
| Better cycling provision | 5 | 4% |
| Smart ticket covering all transport in Kent / extend TfL ticketing | 5 | 4% |
| Proposed new station / route | 5 | 4% |
| Support Reading Gatwick service | 5 | 4% |
| Keep stations / trains clean | 4 | 3% |
| Need more services to City of London | 4 | 3% |
| More needed about North Kent | 3 | 2% |
| Keep drivers / guards / staff need to do more | 3 | 2% |
| Less confusing / easier to purchase fares & tickets | 2 | 2% |
| Opposed to Thanet Parkway station | 2 | 2% |
| Looks forward to / wants faster journeys | 2 | 2% |
| Too technical | 1 | 1% |
| Different TOCs need to work together | 1 | 1% |
| Reduce incidents / landslips | 1 | 1% |
| Medway Valley line trains should serve Tonbridge | 1 | 1% |
| Re-open Headcorn to Tenterden line | 1 | 1% |
| Install solar panels at stations / car parks | 1 | 1% |
| More needed freight on HS1 | 1 | 1% |
| More needed on decarbonisation | 1 | 1% |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>131</i> | |

A wide range of comments was made in response to the question. We welcome the most frequent comment from respondents against the theme 'Well written / good / positive / welcome consultation'. Examples of positive feedback are:

"It [the draft Kent Rail Strategy] looks progressive, comprehensive and very carefully considered."

"The Kent Rail Strategy 2021 is an excellent step forward in the provision of a Railway system for Kent that is fit for the 21st century."

In addition, respondents took the opportunity in Question 12 to state again some general concerns they have about rail in Kent. This is evidenced by the next most frequent codes covering 'Lower fares / more concessionary fares', 'Improve station security / facilities' and 'Onward bus connections / first & last mile...' as well as improvements to make stations more accessible for rail users.

Some comments that were coded in Question 12 and had not occurred in the answers to the previous questions included those concerning 'Keep drivers / guards / staff' and 'Reduce incidents / land slips'. Responses against the former particularly highlighted the impact of staffing on safety, for example:

"Keep drivers and guards – improve station security particularly at night"

Some responses provided helpful feedback suggesting how the draft Kent Rail Strategy can be improved. For example:

- The strategy should have a dedicated section on disability access / inclusion and engage with experts in this field.
- Use plain English as far as possible to ensure that all people that use rail services can understand what it is the strategy is proposing.
- Be even more ambitious, particularly for the long term and be prepared to tailor the strategy further in response to the rate of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic's effect on rail travel.

There were also some new proposals made in this question:

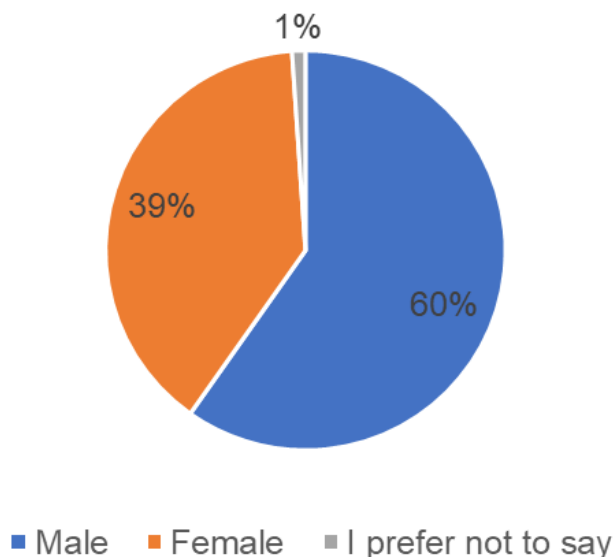
- Use of solar energy at stations and in station car parks to help decarbonise the railway.
- Re-open closed sections of the Kent rail network that suffered from the Beeching cuts. A specific example given is Headcorn to Tenterden.
- Proposed improvements to Ashurst station
- Improve Sandling station (toilets, waiting room, platform to train gap).
- Improve Canterbury East station (new entrance for general use from Gordon Road).
- Extend Sturry station platforms.
- Access improvements to Herne Bay station e.g. cycle parking.
- Access improvements and facilities such as cycle parking at Whitstable station.

14. Equality analysis

This section of the report details the demographics of the respondents to the consultation, the prevalence of those people with protected characteristics or caring responsibilities, and then provides feedback responses gave in response to a question about our published Equalities Impact Assessment. These questions were optional for respondents to answer and those respondents replying on behalf of an organisation were not required to answer them. A total of 93 respondents provided answers about their characteristics – a proportion of 58% of the total 159 online responses.

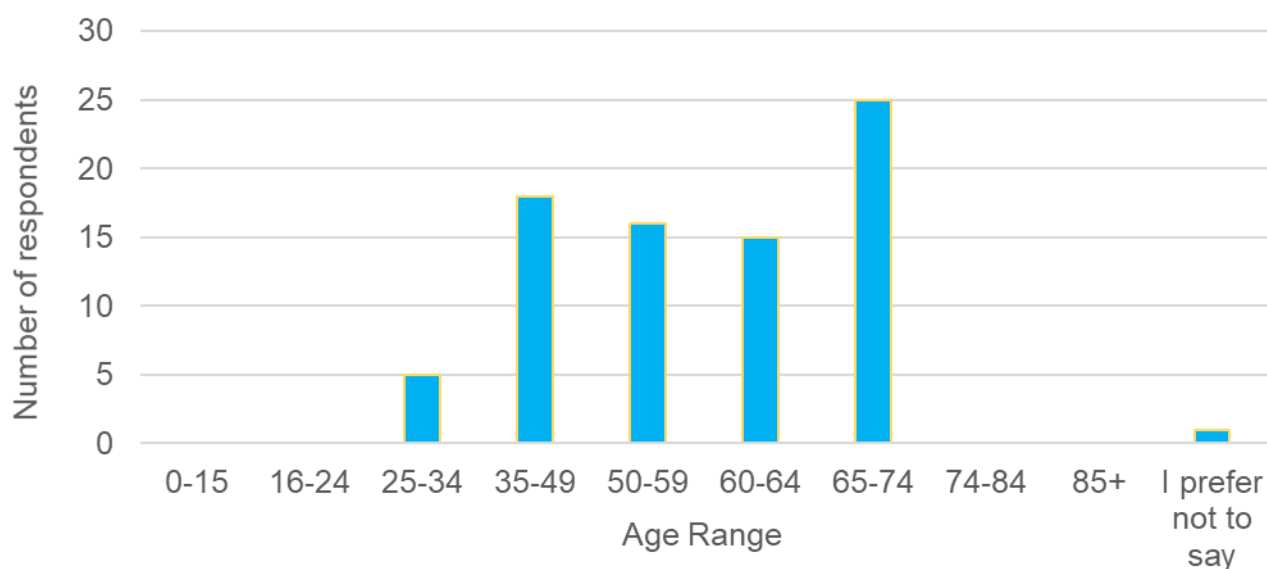
The draft Kent Rail Strategy consultation received more responses from males than females – 60% to 39% respectively as shown in Figure 11. However, given the size of the sample collected (over 150 responses), the proportions mean that a good sample of both female and males have provided their views about the rail strategy’s proposed actions and policies.

Figure 11 - Stated gender of respondents, by proportion



Concerning age, the consultation received responses from those aged between 25 to 74, with the highest single age group represented being 65 to 74-year olds which made up 32% of the respondents giving their age. Some age groups were not represented directly by respondents. Nonetheless, some comments were received about school travel in response to the consultation and the high number of responses from those in the 65-74 age group should mean pensioners viewers have been captured well.

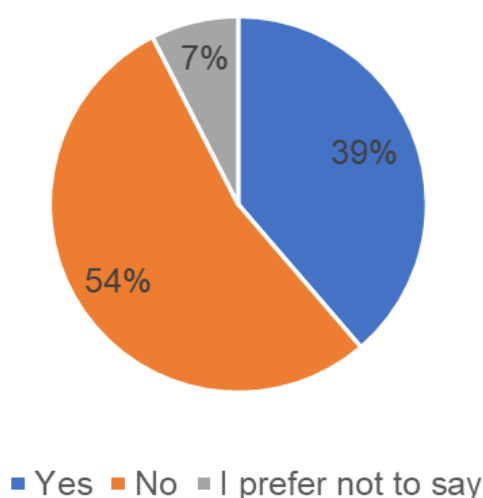
Figure 12 - Number of respondents across age groups



The majority of respondents, 54% stated that they had no religion or belief – see

Figure 13. Those religions represented were Christian, Jew, Muslim, Catholic, Quaker, with Christian being the majority with 30 respondents. One respondent was recorded as each of Jew and Muslim with one each of Catholic and Quaker recorded under ‘Other’.

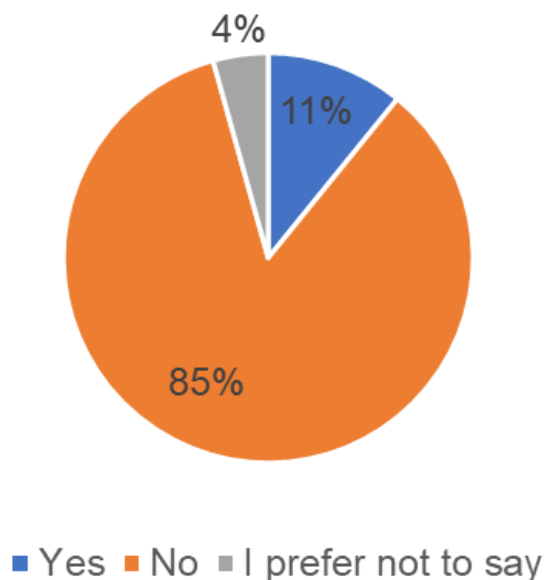
Figure 13 - Proportion of respondents stating they belong to a religion or hold a belief



We made efforts to engage with a range of groups including the KCC Black and Minority Ethnic Forum Staff Group Information, as listed in section 2, and information about the ethnicity of respondents was collected through our online consultation. Results show that all those respondents that gave an answer to the question on ethnicity were White and belonging to the British Isles (a total of 78 respondents) with the exception of two respondents answering White Other who stated further they were either Irish Jew or Mixed White. The two other respondents answering White Other stated they were White or White British.

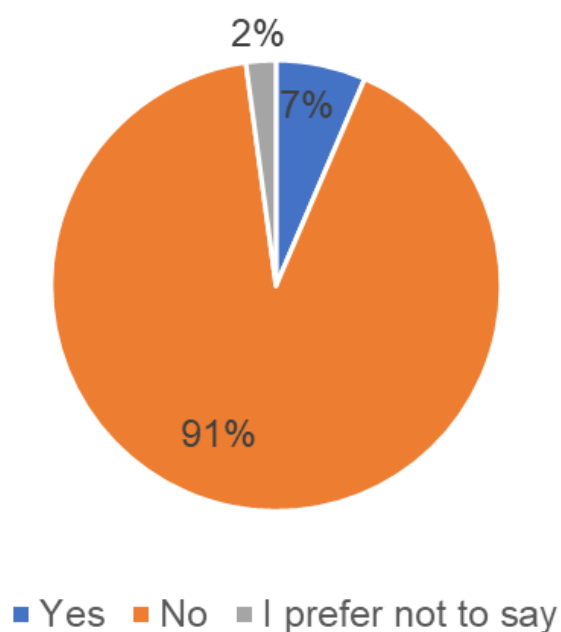
The questionnaire also asked respondents to state whether they considered themselves to have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010. In total, 11% answered that they do have a disability, providing insight to the consultation on the draft Kent Rail Strategy from this group’s perspective.

Figure 14 - Proportion of respondents considering themselves to have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010



The consultation asked if respondents are Carers i.e. those that care unpaid for family and friends with illness. A total of 7% of respondents stated they were Carers, again giving valuable insight to the proposals in the draft Kent Rail Strategy from this perspective.

Figure 15 - Proportion of respondents stating they are Carers



Question 13 of the consultation asked 'We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity, please add any comments'.

We received 76 answers to this question. The frequency of responses by theme is shown in Table 13.

As can be seen, the most frequent responses were to re-state and re-emphasise the desire that the rail network in Kent be accessible for all its users. The responses also indicate the challenges some parts of society face using the railway, from women who may feel more unsafe travelling on trains and using stations to older users who are less familiar with the new technologies for purchasing and paying for tickets or accessing travel information.

Table 13 - Frequency of responses to Question 13 by theme concerning equality and diversity

| Theme | Frequency of mention | Percentage of total comments (rounded to nearest whole number) |
|---|----------------------|--|
| More accessible stations for users / station facilities need to be repaired | 15 | 28% |
| Support better provision for mobility impaired | 7 | 13% |
| Ensure all people can use trains | 6 | 11% |
| Staff stations / trains / provide assistance | 5 | 9% |
| Object to equality and diversity questions | 4 | 8% |
| Neutral about equality and diversity questions | 4 | 8% |
| Sufficient room on trains for mobility equipment / aids / cycles | 2 | 4% |
| Impact assessment undertaken is sufficient | 2 | 4% |
| There should be equal opportunities for all | 1 | 2% |

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



| | | |
|--|------------|----|
| Quiet carriages | 1 | 2% |
| Ensure all people can travel to stations | 1 | 2% |
| Move to IT systems is leaving behind some customers | 1 | 2% |
| Kent pensioners unequal compared to London | 1 | 2% |
| Assessment needs re-doing with input from protected characteristics groups | 1 | 2% |
| Small station on-platform information displays are too small / lack info | 1 | 2% |
| Women are particularly at risk travelling by rail | 1 | 2% |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>131</i> | |

15. You said, we did

This section details how responses to the consultation have helped to inform the final Kent Rail Strategy.

Amended status of London Rail, a subsidiary of Transport for London (TfL)

The draft strategy referred to Metro rail services under the control of “London Overground Railway Limited (LOROL), a subsidiary of Transport for London (TfL)”. In response to the consultation TfL stated the following:

“The subsidiary of Transport for London is London Rail. LOROL (London Overground Rail Operations Ltd) was the private joint-venture company (Arriva and MTR) which operated the first TfL concession for London Overground 2007-16. It has since been replaced by Arriva Rail London (ARL) as operator of the second concession for London Overground until May 2024 extendable up to May 2026.”

The strategy has been updated in section 2.12 to state that London Rail is the rail subsidiary of TfL.

Support for contra-peak off-peak fares for leisure travel out of London in peak periods

As our analysis of the consultation results, shown particularly in

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 3 and

Table 5 demonstrated, a frequent concern was the cost of travel and that, by reducing fares, more people would be encouraged to travel by rail. Some respondents suggested additional measures beyond those already in the draft strategy (such as linking fare increases to the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index). For example, the stakeholder group Rail Future (an independent campaign group working nationally for a better passenger and freight rail network) suggested:

“Add requirement for weekday contra-peak fares at off-peak prices, including railcard discounts, to enable longer days away from especially London, encourage rail travel for such days when early/mid-morning starts are required at more distant destinations, and make better use of spare contra-peak capacity.”

In recognition of the opportunity to make better use of spare capacity, the strategy now supports this proposal.

Re-naming of Connectivity to Ebbsfleet project as Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet

The draft strategy highlighted the Connectivity to Ebbsfleet (C2E) project, working on proposals to improve connectivity to the Elizabeth line at Abbey Wood. Responses from stakeholders including the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and Thames Gateway Kent Partnership clarified that the project is known as the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study, considering all the options for improving public transport along that corridor including the Elizabeth line. Given this, the strategy has been updated to make correct reference to the project as the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study.

The removal of presumed funding support from the London Resort Holding Company for the proposed extension of the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet

Some responses, including from London Resort Company Holdings, the promoter of the Development Consent Order for a leisure and entertainment resort on the Swanscombe Peninsula, highlighted that the draft strategy anticipated the outcome of the planning process. For example:

“Until detailed negotiation on impact has taken place [via the Development Consent Order process] the level of investment in public transport cannot be identified and

therefore it is premature to make assumption about the level of investment / contributions required to be made by LRCH.”

Given this, the strategy has been amended to remove paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 that anticipated the outcome of the Development Consent Order process.

Addition of new section on school and further education college demand for rail travel

Some respondents commented on issues around travel to schools on the rail network, as shown shown in

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 5 and Table 8. In recognition of the school travel market on the rail network in Kent, a section has been added detailing patterns of demand in Kent.

Updated section on developments at Maidstone East and Swanley stations

Some responses referred to the need for improvements at Maidstone East and Swanley stations as given in the examples below:

“... station improvements at Swanley are much needed.”

“I think it's important to offer more routes and improve stations. Maidstone East being notably in poor condition.”

Network Rail has continued its infrastructure works during 2020 and work is progressing to make improvements at these stations. Perhaps due to the travel restrictions and reduced need to travel during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some respondents may be unaware of the progress that has been on-site at Maidstone East to provide a new entrance to the station. An update has been added to the strategy.

Addition of new section on proposed Cuxton Chord linking Medway Valley and North Kent Mainline

Respondents suggested new infrastructure to form a curved section of line joining from the Medway Valley line to the Chatham mainline broadly around Cuxton to Rochester area. This would mean that services could run direct from the Medway towns to Maidstone, as opposed to a change of trains at Strood. The draft strategy has incorporated further details of this proposal and the challenges associated with it into section 7. Given the challenges, we are not proposing it amongst the list of actions for infrastructure enhancement in the strategy.

Stronger commitment in next concession agreement by DfT for extension of ‘Access for All’ funding

Ease of access and use of the railways by all parts of society was a common response to the draft strategy. This was the fifth most frequent theme of comments to the strategy's ambition, as shown in

Kent Rail Strategy 2021 Consultation Report



Table 3. In Table 13 respondents made many further comments concerning accessibility of stations. In response, the strategy has been updated to seek a stronger commitment in the next concession agreement by the Department for Transport (DfT) concerning 'Access for All' funding.

Updated section on proposed requirement for enlarged High-Speed fleet

Engagement with Network Rail during the consultation period provided a renewed estimate of the number of new High-Speed trains that would be required to meet the proposed service increases detailed in the draft strategy. Respondents also highlighted the challenges associated with implementing particular types of High-Speed stock (specifically class 800/801, as detailed in section 0). Given this feedback, the strategy has been updated to state the most up to date estimate of High-Speed rolling stock needed to supplement the existing fleet so that services could be increased. The strategy has also been updated to clearly show consideration of the length of stock and its impact on train length formation.

Updated section on Metro and Mainline service levels reallocating Tunbridge Wells – Charing Cross service from Metro group to Mainline group, following clarification from Southeastern

Responses to the consultation highlighted that the classification of services between Tunbridge Wells and Charing Cross was mistaken in the draft strategy. For example:

“It should be noted services which terminate at Tunbridge Wells have not been proposed for transfer to TfL (as suggested in Paragraph 2.12). This would in fact only apply to metro services running as far as Sevenoaks.”

The strategy has therefore been corrected to state the correct classification of services.

Updated section to include support for Medway Council’s rail project for Hoo Peninsula and detailing collaborative approach to rail policy between Medway Council and KCC and a new section outlining project led by Medway Council to convert freight route between Hoo Junction and Hoo St Werburgh

At the time of writing the draft strategy, KCC was aware of the successful bid by Medway Council for Housing Infrastructure Funding to invest in the rail network to Hoo Peninsula. Since the proposal fell outside of KCC’s jurisdiction the draft strategy did not detail the proposal.

In response to the proposal being raised by responses to the consultation, the strategy has been updated to include details of Medway Council’s proposals for the rail line to Hoo and to be clear that KCC is supportive of this work given the improved public transport and housing growth the scheme can provide.

Additional section outlining Network Rail’s commitment to new ‘First and Last Mile’ and ‘Mobility as a Service’ projects in partnership with Southeastern and KCC

Comments highlighted the need for consideration of how people travel to and from rail stations as well as their journey on the rail network. There were some specific comments that highlighted First and Last Mile travel as it is known – referring to the typically shorter local journeys from home or work to the rail station. This theme was the most frequently raised in responses to Question 4 concerning our proposed actions for rail policy, as shown in

Table 4. Given this the strategy will detail further the work already underway with Network Rail to understand First and Last Mile travel. In addition, it will detail the work underway to develop proposals for Mobility as a Service (MaaS) which can provide easier access to purchasing tickets and finding transport for the whole journey door to door.

Updated section on Medway Valley line to include need to restore through service to Tonbridge

Extending Medway Valley line services from their current terminus at Paddock Wood to instead terminate at Tonbridge was proposed by some responses in reply to our question on the draft ambitions. Although this proposal was covered in the draft strategy, the section has been expanded to further elaborate on this requirement.

16. Next steps

The feedback we have received from the consultation will be used to help further develop the strategy and obtain further support for it from stakeholders and within the rail industry.

The changes detailed in section 15 will be included in the final Kent Rail Strategy along with any further changes such as addressing errors or changes that occur in the rail industry or affecting the operations of services in Kent prior to adoption of the strategy.

The final Kent Rail Strategy will be presented at KCC's Cabinet meeting on the 25 January. If the Cabinet takes the decision to adopt the strategy as policy, KCC will publish the final strategy on the KCC website.