

Target 35: Work with bus and train providers and lobby government to improve public transport services in Kent		
Lead Cabinet Members: Keith Ferrin/Kevin Lynes	Lead Managing Director: Mike Austerbury/David Cockburn	Lead Officers: Mick Sutch/David Hall

Status: On course

List the partners with whom we are working to deliver this target:

Southeastern Trains
Eurostar
Network Rail
Arriva
Stagecoach
Other bus operators
District Councils

Progress to date on delivering this Towards 2010 target:

Service quality on Southeastern trains has continued to improve since taking over the franchise in April 2006:

- Latest punctuality figures from the Office of Rail Regulation show the Moving Annual Average (up to the first quarter of 2008/09) show 92.3% of trains arriving within five minutes of timetable up from 88.7% reported last January
- Complaints have continued to fall – currently at 13 complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys

High Speed Domestic Services using CTRL (High Speed 1) will start in December 2009 and the peak and off-peak specification are now available on Southeastern's website. The start of these services will coincide with a complete overhaul of rail services between Kent and London.

There will be an overall increase in trains to London in the three hour peak period with 47 stations in Kent having more services and 14 having a reduction. All the major towns in Kent will have more services to London in the peak, except for Maidstone which has the same number as now. The increases are not confined to those stations which will have the high speed services at the end of the year - Sevenoaks will have nine more trains in the peak.

There was particular concern that peak services to the City (Cannon Street) would be significantly cut at stations which will have the new CTRL services, but the reductions have been limited to no more than one in the three hour period and in some cases services to Charing Cross have been increase enabling passengers to change at London Bridge for Cannon Street. Cuts in Victoria services have also been reduced to no more than two trains (from nine to seven at Faversham and Sittingbourne).

In the off-peak, 17 stations will have an increase in services to London, with nine suffering a reduction. Maidstone East and West Malling will lose the hourly fast service to Cannon Street.

A Select Committee on Rail Passenger Services has been set up by KCC to investigate the benefits of improvements to journey times and services to London and the long-term contribution to the regeneration of Kent, although there are concerns that proposed fare increases could reduce the beneficial effects. We have also commissioned a study on the implications of CTRL DS on business locations to maximize the opportunities for companies wishing to locate in Kent.

The new high speed rail services with dramatically reduced journey times will help regenerate parts of east and north Kent by making access to London more attractive. However, the success of these services will also depend on the fares charged on these trains. Already fares in Kent and East Sussex are rising faster than elsewhere in the country and are likely to continue to increase faster for the next

two years. On top of these increases, there will be a premium added to existing fares for the high speed services. These have yet to be finally announced and it is unknown whether there will be different rates in the peak periods from the off-peak. The latest published premium fares suggested that the premiums would be 10 – 30% higher than existing fares and the County Council has commissioned a survey to gauge rail travelers' reaction to such fares.

Eurostar services from Ebbsfleet started in November 2007 with seven trains a day to and from Paris and five to and from Brussels, via Lille. At the same time services from Ashford International Passenger Station were cut from 11 trains per day to four, with no direct service to and from Brussels. However, extensive lobbying by KCC and its partners has resulted in Eurostar reconsidering and they are to restore a direct Ashford to Brussels service from 23 February 2009, when the Channel Tunnel is fully repaired after the fire in September.

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Kent is on track for continued growth in bus passenger journeys from 44.8m in 2004/05 to 48.6m in 2006/07, contributing to our excellent CPA rating. Bus patronage figures compiled for 2007/08 are 51.6m, an increase of 6.17% on 2006/07 figures. This has been one of KCC's key performance indicators (BVPI 102) and contributes towards our CPA rating.

Quality Bus Partnerships are improving reliability and quality with half the total bus fleet in Kent now being easy access, low floor entry. KCC continues to work with bus companies on innovative schemes such as the Punctuality Improvement Partnership pilot on the Thanet Loop and the Kings Hill/West Malling station shuttle as well as Fastrack and Smartlink which helped KCC win the Transport Authority of the Year Award at the UK Bus Awards in November 2007 together with the Innovation and Infrastructure Awards for Fastrack.

Innovative schemes are being developed including using franchise arrangements to generate a revenue scheme to fund further Fastrack type schemes including Smartlink at Ashford and a potential Dover Expressway linking an aerial tramway proposal between the harbour and the castle. A special grant scheme is under development to offer up to £1m of capital grants to Kent bus operators to stimulate private sector matching. The first Kent Kickstart scheme in 2009/10 is likely to include ten new buses and other improvements in Ashford, partnering with Stagecoach.

KCC also works to encourage integration with operators to encourage joint ticketing and being able to purchase bus tickets before boarding buses through the "plus bus" scheme, which is now available at 26 main railway stations in Kent. A KCC bid to Government to participate in a National Rail Station Travel Plan was successful and received approval in June 2008. The pilot will be undertaken for the Ashford Station and is aimed at improving integration and enhancing station access. KCC will work with operators to introduce smart card technology in 2008/09.

Following a successful launch of the Kent Freedom Pass (see Towards 2010 target 30), meetings have been held with bus operators to ensure they are on board. From June 2008, the scheme has been extended to cover schools in Maidstone, Malling, Shepway and Dover. To date, 1,774 passes have been issued in these new areas in addition to the 5,200 passes in the original pilot areas. However a bid to the Government's Pathfinder Programme, which included the extension of the scheme from ages 16 to 19, was unsuccessful.

Around 200 KCC supported bus services have been sustained with no cuts and we anticipate being able to achieve this for the next financial year within budget following a successful re-tendering exercise on contracts now due for renewal.

Following lobbying in November 2007, additional grant was made available to Kent to cover the introduction of new national concessionary travel scheme for elderly and disabled people, and Government confirmed additional special grant so all district authorities, bar Tunbridge Wells, will have sufficient funding for the scheme. KCC is supporting the scheme, underwriting the cost of the scheme's

9am start time. Kent has also lobbied Government over the new Transport Bill – Putting Passengers First - seeking to strengthen partnership working.

Work planned between now and 2010:

- The peak period specification for train services from December 2009 will be announced in the autumn. There is a need to ensure that appropriate levels of service are provided from all Kent stations, particularly that current rail links to the City (Cannon Street and Blackfriars) are maintained.
- A study into the forecast effects of the CTRL DS on passenger flows at key stations, on business locations in Kent and the potential for parkways stations at Minster and Westenhanger will be carried out during 2008.
- Quality Bus Partnerships are being developed for new areas of the county including Dover working with Stagecoach and Tunbridge Wells working with Arriva. A Punctuality Improvement Partnership is under development for Thanet with Stagecoach, focusing on the Westwood Cross area.
- KCC is working with South Eastern and Railtrack to improve interchange at 13 stations in Kent during 2008/2009 and with bus operators for a further roll-out of the Plus Bus rail ticket add on for unlimited bus travel as part of a rail journey.
- Expansion of Fastrack is planned, together with the introduction/expansion of off-bus ticketing machines at bus stops. Work is in hand to deliver Smartlink for Ashford, beginning with a Park & Ride site at the Warren from 2009. KCC is supporting Maidstone with the development of a new Park & Ride site at Langley Park Farm in 2009. Delivery of a new Park & Ride service for Tunbridge Wells is also in hand.
- Work on the Kent Regeneration Strategy will incorporate a comprehensive travel plan covering strategic infrastructure provision such as rail freight and a Lower Thames Crossing.

Measurable indicators:

None – This Towards 2010 target has been formally agreed as having an ‘aspirational’ status and progress is measured via qualitative means.

Monitoring completed by: Mick Sutch/David Hall

Date: xx January 2009