

Kent Transport Board 10 March

Rail Services Update

Since the last meeting, Southeastern has provided more information on its website relating to future peak service levels from all stations after the High Speed Train Services are introduced from 13 December this year and has also produced revised before and after journey times for the high speed services. There has also been a lot of controversy on train fares. Taking these in turn:

Peak Service Levels

Southeastern has posted before and after peak service level information on its website

<http://www.southeastern2009.co.uk/index.php/cms/pages/view/95>

giving current and proposed numbers of trains in the peak three hour periods to all London terminals (including St. Pancras). The changes are summarised by District Council areas in the attached Annex 1.

Overall there are increases in services at 47 stations in the KCC area (including Ebbsfleet) and decreases at 14. There are net increases in services in the three hour peak periods from stations which will be served by the high speed services:

Ebbsfleet – 12
Ashford – 8
Canterbury West – 7
Gravesend – 6
Dover, Folkestone West and Central – 5
Ramsgate, Broadstairs – 4
Faversham, Sittingbourne – 3
Herne Bay, Whitstable, Birchington – 1

There has been real concern that where high speed services are to be introduced, there would be significant cuts in services to the existing London stations in the peak and this was certainly the view take by the Strategic Rail Authority before it was abolished. Representations made by local authorities and others have had an effect on the current proposals and cuts in services to Cannon Street (for the City) have been restricted to a maximum of one service per hour and in some cases (Ashford, Dover and the two Folkestone Stations), there has been an increase in services to Charing Cross, enabling easy interchange to Cannon Street from London Bridge.

Away from the high speed services, there have been net increases in existing services at some stations, notably:

Sevenoaks – 9
Tonbridge – 6
Dartford - 3
Marden – 3
Pluckley – 3
Tunbridge Wells – 2

In the larger towns, only Maidstone does not have an increase in peak services with the loss of the fast services to Charing Cross in the late morning (shoulder) peak partially compensated by an additional service to Victoria.

Stations which experience a net loss of services are:

-3 Chestfield

-2 Dumpton Park, Newington, Teynham and Westgate

-1 Chartham, Chilham, Minster, Sturry, Higham, Northfleet, Meopham, Sole Street and Stone Crossing.

Journey Time Savings on CTRL DS

Southeastern has also produced a table of revised before and after journey time information on its website and this is shown in the attached Annex 2. Some timings both before and after have changed significantly compared to both published before and this comparison is shown in Annex 3.

On the revised existing times, these are based on average peak times and some differences are significant. For example Gravesend moves from 42 to 57 minutes, correcting an error as 42 minutes will only get a passenger to London Bridge rather than Charing Cross/Cannon Street.

On the revised after 13 December times, there have been significant reductions in journey times from some stations particularly from Dover and Folkestone with Dover now predicted to be 64 minutes from St Pancras and Folkestone Central and West being 52 and 49 minutes respectively. The new timings have arisen as testing on the new trains has progressed but it has to be stressed that these times are the 'shortest' journey times and will be for the off peak. In the peak periods trains from Dover and Thanet will join together at Ashford in the morning and split in the evening peak which will add some seven to eleven minutes to these shortest times.

Fares

Existing Services

Fare increases for regulated fares (season tickets, standard return fares etc) on Southeastern were set by Government at an average RPI+3% for the new franchise starting in 2007 for five years. At an individual station the maximum allowed increase is RPI+8% and there is also a cap on the cumulative increase over time at individual stations. After 2011, increases will be an average RPI+1% as on the rest of the rail network

The general argument from Government for this approach is that rail passengers should pay a higher proportion of the costs so that the taxpayer provides a lower level of subsidy and the reason given why Southeastern's fares are higher than others is that there has been unprecedented expenditure in the franchise area – CTRL (over £5bn), new rolling stock for CTRL domestics (£600m) and £93m on power supply upgrading.

Within the Southeastern franchise, passengers in Kent and East Sussex generally are experiencing higher increases than RPI+3% and this is due to the London factor. Transport for London has moved towards zonal fares (with the Travelcard) so that fares from outer London stations to the centre over a similar distance are being made comparable. Because the other franchises carrying commuters to London (South West Trains, Southern etc) are subject to RPI+1% increases, this average also applies to fares from the London stations

within Southeastern franchise. The fare rises at select stations (as on Southeastern's website) from January 2009 are shown in Annex 4.

With the current credit crunch, it is likely that the RPI in July (when the base fare level is set) will be negative so that increases for regulated fares from January 2010 will be relatively small. The train operating companies are pressing Government to waive the rule, as in most of the country (with RPI +1%) it is likely that fares will actually be cut. It appears that Government is resisting this call, but the consequences are that unregulated fares (off-peak etc) will face greater increases

Measures which could ease the plight of the commuter would be season ticket loans, carnet tickets (ie buying a number of tickets in advance at a discount) which would suit passengers who travel regularly, but not every day (and so do not benefit from season ticket reductions) and extension of the London Oyster Card scheme into Kent. The County Council will explore the possibilities of these initiatives.

High Speed Service Premium Fares

Passengers on the high speed services from December will be subjected to additional premium fares on top of the escalating existing levels of fares. The levels of these premiums are still under discussion between DfT and Southeastern, but supplements of 10 to 30% above fares on the classic services have been mentioned.

The real concern is that these additional costs, on top of continuing underlying increases higher than anywhere else, could largely negate the significant reductions in journey times to London the high speed services will bring. This is particularly so when coupled to the current problems in the housing market which will constrain people and businesses from relocating to those areas in east and north Kent which need regeneration.

The County Council is concerned that the regenerative effects of the high speed services will be negated by high fares and has commissioned a survey of passengers to gauge their reaction to the possible premiums.

The County Council will press for lower introductory fares to ensure passengers do take advantage of these services, but in the likelihood that this will be unsuccessful, if the new services do not attract sufficient passengers, Southeastern and Government have to negotiate a reduction of the fares which would probably entail renegotiation of subsidy levels from Government to Southeastern and no prospect of the operating company paying a premium to Government by the end of the franchise period.

**Changes in Peak Rail Services to/from London from December 2009
By District Council Area**

Peak Services are defined as arrivals in London between 7 and 10am and departures from London between 4 and 7pm

Ashford

Ashford +8: 6 St Pancras, 6 to 7 Charing Cross, 5 to 4 Cannon Street and 7 to 9 Victoria

Pluckley +3: 5 to 7 Charing Cross, 3 to 4 Cannon Street

Charing +1: 7 to 8 Victoria

Wye 0: 3 to 4 Charing Cross, 1 to 0 Cannon Street

Chilham -1: 1 to 0 Cannon Street

Canterbury

Canterbury West +7: 5 St Pancras, 4 to 5 Charing Cross, 1 to 0 Cannon Street, 1 to 3 Victoria

Adisham +1: 1 to 2 Cannon Street

Bekesbourne +1: 1 to 2 Cannon Street

Herne Bay +1: 3 to St Pancras, 5 to 4 Cannon Street, 7 to 6 Victoria

Whitstable +1: 3 to St Pancras, 5 to 4 Cannon Street, 7 to 6 Victoria

Canterbury East – no change

Selling – no change

Chartham -1: 1 to 0 Cannon Street

Sturry -1: 1 to 0 Cannon Street

Chestfield -3: 3 to 2 Cannon Street, 6 to 4 Victoria

Dartford

Ebbsfleet +12: 12 St Pancras

Dartford +3: 21 to 18 Charing Cross, 11 to 15 Cannon Street, 3 to 5 Victoria

Longfield +1: 2 to Cannon Street, 7 to 6 Victoria

Swanscombe +1: 5 to 6 Charing Cross

Greenhithe 0: 9 to 10 Charing Cross, 7 to 6 Cannon Street

Stone Crossing -1: 3 to 2 Cannon Street

Dover

Dover +5: 5 St Pancras, 3 to 4 Charing Cross, 3 to 2 Cannon Street

Kearsney +1: 1 to 2 Cannon Street

Deal +1: 3 to 4 Charing Cross

Martin Mill +1: 3 to 4 Charing Cross

Walmer +1: 3 to 4 Charing Cross

Sandwich +1: 3 to 4 Charing Cross

Aylesham – no change

Shepherdswell– no change

Snowdown– no change

Gravesham

Gravesend +6: 6 St Pancras

Higham -1: 5 to 4 Cannon Street

Northfleet -1: 5 to 4 Cannon Street

Meopham -1: 7 to 6 Victoria

Sole Street -1: 6 to 5 Victoria

Maidstone

Marden +3: 4 to 6 Charing Cross, 3 to 4 CS

Barming +1: 6 to 7 Victoria

Harrietsham +1: 7 to 8 Victoria

Hollingbourne +1: 7 to 8 Victoria

Lenham +1: 7 to 8 Victoria

Headcorn +1: 6 to 8 Charing Cross, 5 to 4 Cannon Street
Staplehurst +1: 6 to 8 Charing Cross, 5 to 4 Cannon Street
Bearsted 0: 1 to 0 Charing Cross; 7 to 8 Victoria
Maidstone East 0: 1 to 0 Charing Cross; 7 to 8 Victoria

Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks: 10 to 19 Charing Cross
Dunton Green +2: 1 to 2 Charing Cross, 5 to 6 Cannon Street
Knockholt +2: 1 to 2 Charing Cross; 5 to 6 Cannon Street
Swanley +2: 8 to 10 Victoria
Kemsing +1: 4 to 5 Victoria
Otford +1: 7 to 8 Victoria
Bat & Ball – no change
Eynsford – no change
Shoreham – no change
Farningham Road – no change

Shepway

Folkestone Central +5: 5 St Pancras 3 to 4 Charing Cross, 3 to 2 Cannon Street
Folkestone West +5: 5 St Pancras 3 to 4 Charing Cross, 3 to 2 Cannon Street
Sandling 0: 3 to 4 Charing Cross, 3 to 2 Cannon Street
Westenhanger 0: 3 to 4 Charing Cross, 3 to 2 Cannon Street

Swale

Faversham +3: 6 St Pancras, 7 to 6 CS, 9 to 7 Victoria
Sittingbourne +3: 6 St Pancras, 7 to 6 CS, 9 to 7 Victoria
Newington -2: 3 to 2 Cannon Street, 5 to 4 Victoria
Teynham -2: 3 to 2 Cannon Street, 5 to 4 Victoria

Thanet

Ramsgate +4: 5 St Pancras, 7 to 6 Victoria
Broadstairs +2: 5 St Pancras, 2 to 0 Charing Cross, 5 to 4 Cannon Street, 7 to 6 Victoria
Margate +3: 6 St Pancras, 1 to 0 Charing Cross, 5 to 4 Cannon Street, 7 to 6 Victoria
Birchington +1: 3 to St Pancras, 5 to 4 Cannon Street, 7 to 6 Victoria
Minster -1: 1 to 0 Cannon Street
Dumpton Park -2: 6 to 4 Victoria
Westgate -2: 3 to 2 Cannon Street, 6 to 5 Victoria

Tonbridge & Malling

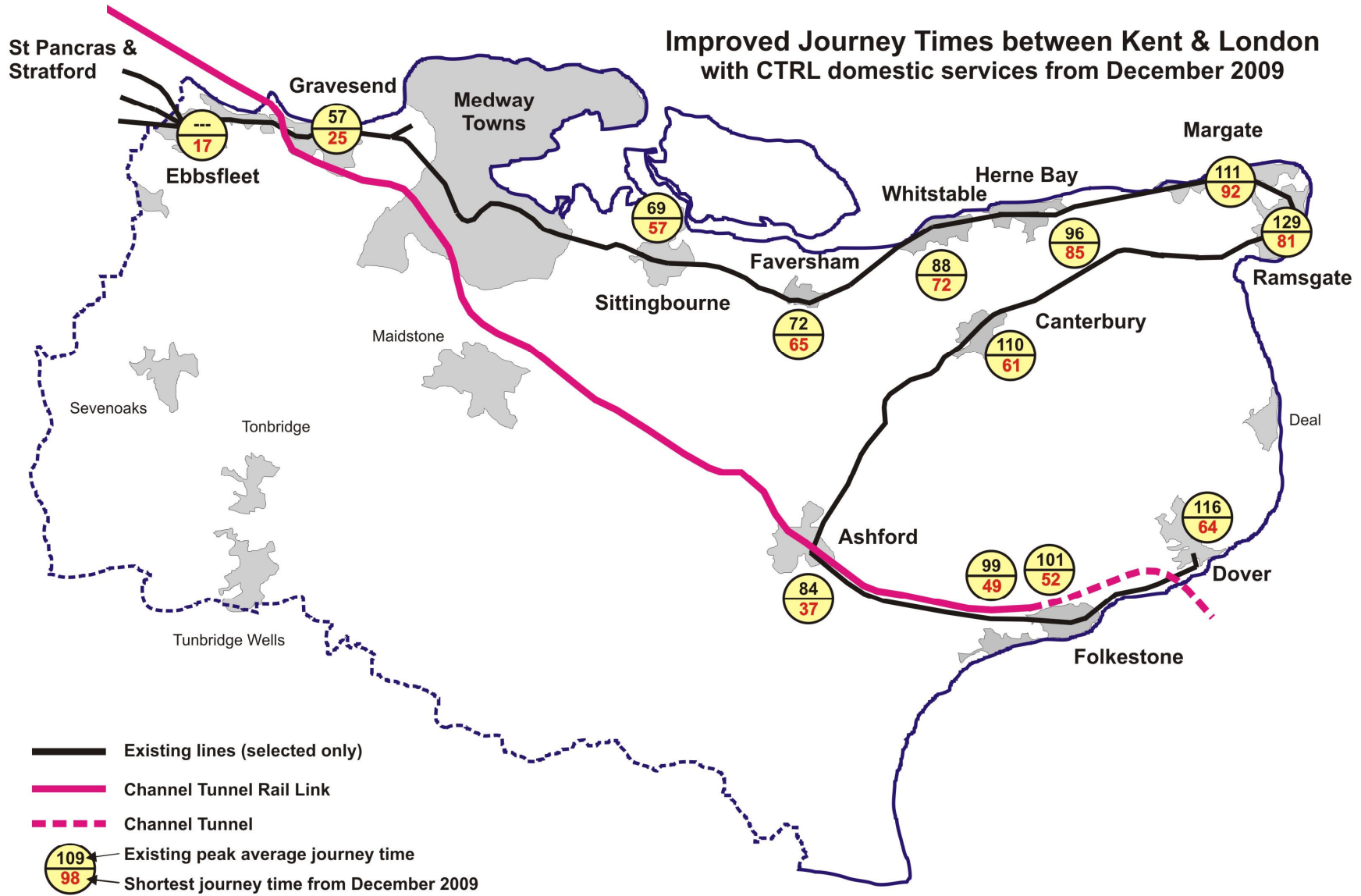
Tonbridge +6: 12 to 18 Charing Cross
East Malling +2: 5 to 7 Victoria
Hildenborough +2: 7 to 8 Charing Cross, 3 to 4 Cannon Street
Borough Green +1: 7 to 8 Victoria
West Malling 0: 1 to 0 Charing Cross; 7 to 8 Victoria

Tunbridge Wells

High Brooms +2: 9 to 11 Charing Cross
Tunbridge Wells +2: 9 to 11 Charing Cross
Paddock Wood +1: 6 to 8 Charing Cross, 5 to 4 Cannon Street

Annex 2

Improved Journey Times between Kent & London with CTRL domestic services from December 2009



Schematic Only - Not to Scale

Annex 3: Revised and old Journey Time Comparisons to London on High Speed Services

From	Previous Journey Times			January 2009 Journey Times		
	Existing	Dec-09	Saving	Existing	Dec-09	Saving
Ashford	83	37	46	84	37	47
Canterbury West	102	61	41	110	61	49
Dover Priory	112	74	38	116	64	52
Faversham	76	66	10	72	65	7
Folkestone Central	101	63	38	101	52	49
Folkestone West	98	63	35	99	49	50
Gravesend	42	24	18	57	25	32
Herne Bay	90	80	10	96	85	11
Margate	109	98	11	111	92	19
Ramsgate	119	84	35	129	81	48
Sittingbourne	66	56	10	69	57	12
Whitstable	84	74	10	88	72	16

ANNEX 4 : Increases in Season Ticket Prices to London between 2008 and 2009

Origin	Area	2008	2009	% Increase
Strood	Kent	64.0	71.5	11.72
Greenhithe	Kent	42.0	46.5	10.71
Chatham	Kent	68.5	75.5	10.22
Gillingham	Kent	68.5	75.5	10.22
Tunbridge Wells	Kent	75.0	82.5	10.00
Faversham	Kent	82.0	90.0	9.76
Herne Bay	Kent	82.0	90.0	9.76
Whitstable	Kent	82.0	90.0	9.76
Sittingbourne	Kent	73.0	80.0	9.59
Rochester	Kent	68.5	75.0	9.49
Tonbridge	Kent	68.5	75.0	9.49
Ashford	Kent	86.5	94.5	9.25
Folkestone stations	Kent	87.0	95.0	9.20
Maidstone stations	Kent	72.5	79.0	8.97
Gravesend	Kent	56.0	61.0	8.93
Canterbury stations	Kent	87.0	94.5	8.62
Headcorn	Kent	82.5	89.5	8.48
Dartford	Kent	42.0	45.5	8.33
Sevenoaks	Kent	57.5	62.0	7.83
Margate	Kent	88.6	95.5	7.79
Ramsgate	Kent	88.6	95.5	7.79
Swanley	Kent	45.0	48.5	7.78
Bexleyheath	London	28.5	31.8	11.58
Bromley South	London	28.5	31.8	11.58
Hayes	London	28.5	31.8	11.58
Abbey Wood	London	23.2	25.0	7.76
Beckenham Junction	London	23.2	25.0	7.76
Woolwich Arsenal	London	23.2	25.0	7.76
Greenwich	London	13.5	14.5	7.41
Lewisham	London	13.5	14.5	7.41
Blackheath	London	17.8	19.0	6.74
Catford Bridge	London	17.8	19.0	6.74
Lee	London	17.8	19.0	6.74
Orpington	London	34.5	36.2	4.93
Battle	Sussex	82.5	91.0	10.30
Wadhurst	Sussex	79.5	87.5	10.06
Hastings	Sussex	90.5	96.0	6.08