



Department
for Transport



South Eastern Rail Franchise Stakeholder Briefing Document

Shaping the Future

November 2017



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St Pancras Station



1

Foreword

1. Foreword by the Transport Secretary

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

Secretary of State for Transport



Across the UK, this Government is investing at record levels to improve the experience for rail passengers. State-of-the-art infrastructure, new and longer trains, smart ticketing, improved information and updated Wi-Fi are all contributing towards a modern, 21st century railway that drives our nation's economic prosperity.

Our proposals will transform travel on the South Eastern network, delivering longer trains, more room for passengers and more reliable journeys. Passengers will benefit from a step-change in customer service, with improved smart ticketing and on-board Wi-Fi.

The final stages of the Thameslink and Crossrail programmes will also see new services integrate seamlessly with the South Eastern network from 2018, unlocking capacity and delivering improved access to the heart of the capital – as well as direct accessibility to key destinations such as Heathrow Airport.

Our Consultation

More than 10,000 passengers, businesses, and other stakeholders took the time and effort to respond to the consultation, providing us with valuable insights into how to improve your service. We have listened carefully to each and every response.

This reflects our Government's commitment to put passengers at the heart of decision making on the railway, allowing us to develop a specification that meets your needs and requirements.

Your Response

Your responses highlighted the importance of getting both the 'basics' right – providing high quality, frequent and reliable services – and developing a railway fit for the future. You wished to see more space for passengers, with longer trains, improved facilities and a far stronger focus on customer service.

Our plans

The publication of the Invitation to Tender today demonstrates how we will meet these ambitions, and ensure that South Eastern rail services also contribute towards broader objectives of supporting economic growth and opportunity, sustainability, and connecting local communities and businesses.

Our specification will deliver longer trains, providing space for at least 40,000 additional passengers in the morning rush-hour, with 12-car services introduced on the busiest routes. Metro-style trains will be introduced on suburban routes, boosting capacity and providing more space to allow standing passengers to travel in comfort, similar to those on other high capacity routes into London. Services within the Metro area will be more reliable, and will benefit from a more convenient, simple to understand 'turn up and go' style timetable.

Our vision for stronger performance and reliability will be delivered through a brand new collaborative partnership between the next operator and Network Rail. This will deliver shared incentives to ensure that both organisations work together to put the passenger first, delivering a more reliable, efficient railway for passengers and the taxpayer.

The next operator will also be required to commit to new standards in service quality, with an enhanced focus on the cleanliness of services and stations, increased availability of staff and improved communication with passengers, especially during periods of disruption. Improved Delay Repay compensation will be introduced, with compensation for passengers if their journeys are delayed by more than 15 minutes – reduced from 30 minutes currently.

Passengers will also benefit from a significant update to Wi-Fi connectivity, allowing all passengers to work, socialise, shop or relax during their journey. Smart ticketing will be introduced across the franchise, with a trial of Pay-As-You-Go ticketing in the Medway Towns, and new investment in stations and facilities.

Changes to terminal destinations

We have listened carefully to all passengers, taking fully into account their views, including around reducing the choice of London terminals to increase the reliability and frequency of the train service.

A significant majority were opposed to the concept of moving to a single London terminal and we will not do this. We have decided not to reduce the choice of London terminals across all routes. However, we do need to make some more limited changes to services to deliver the very significant benefits for all passengers outlined above.

We will therefore require bidders to make the following changes by 2022, subject to a future public consultation on detailed timetable proposals:

- **Bexleyheath Line** services would in future run to London Bridge, Charing Cross and Cannon Street with longer 10-12 car trains (which cannot fit into a number of stations on the route into Victoria). The small minority of passengers who currently travel directly to Victoria and Denmark Hill would change at Lewisham, where they would connect with more frequent services to Victoria.
- **Hayes Line** services would in future run to London Bridge, Charing Cross and Victoria. The small minority of passengers who currently travel directly to Cannon Street would change at London Bridge.
- **North Kent Line** services to Charing Cross via Lewisham would in future run to Cannon Street, to facilitate new Thameslink services to London Bridge, Blackfriars, Farringdon and London St Pancras along this route.
- **Sidcup Line** services will continue to run to Charing Cross, with Cannon Street services moving to peak times reflecting the principal demand for these services is commuters. Outside peak hours, the small number of passengers for Cannon Street would change at the new London Bridge station.

All Metro stations would retain a range of London stations. No passengers would have to pay more for their journey if they are required to interchange on South Eastern services, and journey times would be similar to today.

Why are we making these changes?

Reducing the number of trains that are required to cross each other's paths at the junctions at Lewisham will mean that services via Lewisham can be much more reliable, resilient and faster. These changes will make the timetable simpler to operate, with more services running at more convenient, regular intervals, than could otherwise be achieved without reducing services. For example:

- **Bexleyheath Line** passengers will benefit from an increased frequency and capacity to London Bridge and Charing Cross, and increased capacity to Cannon Street.
- Services between **Victoria and Lewisham** will double in frequency to four trains per hour, increasing capacity into London and accessibility to the hospitals at Denmark Hill.
- **Hayes Line** passengers will benefit from a new direct connection to Victoria.
- **Sidcup Line** passengers will benefit from additional capacity, and a new half-hourly all-day service between Crayford and Victoria which will serve the hospitals at Denmark Hill, and provide interchange opportunities at locations such as Peckham Rye to access the London Overground and routes to Clapham Common.

None of these benefits would be possible without these minor changes to London terminal destinations. These changes will enable us to deliver the modern, reliable, efficient service that passengers expect, and will transform the South Eastern network into the 21st century railway system passengers deserve.

Conclusion

UK rail services are among the fastest growing, safest and most reliable in Europe. Every franchise competition brings with it the opportunity to build on that record, and as this publication shows we are doing that through a process of partnership and collaboration that genuinely puts the passenger first. As we enter an exciting new era for rail in the South East, I hope you will continue to engage with the bidders to continue this process and ensure that the next franchise is built around the passenger, by the passenger, for the passenger.



2

Introduction

2. What is this document for?

The contract for the current South Eastern franchise expires in December 2018, and we need to find the next operator to run the service, deliver improvements for passengers, and achieve value-for-money for the taxpayer.

As part of that process, the Department for Transport held a consultation for all stakeholders in the South East, between 14 March and 30 June 2017 on proposals to improve the passenger experience under the new franchise.

More than 10,000 formal responses were received – from passengers, businesses, local authorities and other stakeholders – unprecedented for a rail franchise consultation, as well as two petitions, with more than 28,000 signatures.

We are extremely grateful to all those individuals and organisations that took the time and effort to respond, and those that attended the consultation events. These comments and views have been carefully considered and have informed the development of our plans for your rail services under the new franchise.

This stakeholder briefing document:

- Summarises the consultation process.**
- Outlines your views regarding the future of the South Eastern rail network.**
- Responds to your feedback, and identifies how your thoughts have informed the specification for the new franchise.**
- Summarises the improvements to services, stations, performance and ticketing that we have specified for the franchise in the Invitation to Tender (ITT), which is also published today.**

This document is not intended to replace the ITT, and in the case of any inconsistencies the ITT takes precedence.



? Throughout this document you will see a number of questions in boxes, looking like this. These correspond to the questions that were asked in our public consultation earlier this year.



3

Background

3. The current South Eastern service

The South Eastern franchise is one of the largest in the UK, operating over 1,900 services each weekday, and carrying over 180 million passengers a year. While it is principally a commuter railway, with around 65% of passengers travelling during peak times, there are also important business and leisure flows. It serves passengers in South East London, Kent and parts of East Sussex.

The majority of services on the franchise (around 90%) are either to or from London, using multiple routes to terminals at London Charing Cross, Cannon Street, Blackfriars, Victoria and London St Pancras. Local connectivity is also provided by the Sheerness and Medway Valley branch lines.

The South Eastern franchise can be viewed in three distinct segments:

- **Metro services:** the commuter services that operate within or just outside the Greater London area. These routes serve south east London, Hayes, Dartford and Sevenoaks.
- **Mainline services:** the longer distance services operating between London, Kent and parts of East Sussex.
- **High Speed services:** high speed Javelin services operating between London St Pancras, Ebbsfleet and Ashford, and linking towns in Kent such as Folkestone, Dover and Canterbury.

Since 2006, services have been operated by London and South Eastern Railway (LSER) Limited, a joint venture between Go-Ahead and Keolis, under the brand name Southeastern.

Challenges

While the current franchisee has delivered improvements, rising passenger numbers and a complex and ageing network pose several challenges for South Eastern services.

Train services are also complex, originating from different London terminals with junctions where trains cross each other's routes, creating operational complexity. This increases the opportunity for delays, and makes it harder to timetable extra services.

Increasing passenger volumes – and a high proportion of passengers travelling during peak times – leads to overcrowding, while much of the network originally dates to the Victorian era, presenting challenges for maintaining the track, junctions and signals. Many stations have capacity issues, as they were not designed for the volume of passengers using them today.

Population growth within London and the South East, together with new developments such as Ebbsfleet Garden City, mean that more passengers will wish to use rail services in the future.

While the current franchisee has delivered improvements, the Department recognises that the challenges inherent in running a complex commuter railway means that services often fail to reach the high standards that passengers rightly expect. This document outlines your thoughts on how to address these challenges, and our plans for tackling them.

Future Franchise

Three companies are currently competing to operate the next South Eastern franchise:

- South Eastern Holdings Ltd, a joint venture between Abellio and the consortium of East Japan Railway Company (JRE) and Mitsui & Co Ltd. (Mitsui).
- London and South East Passenger Rail Services Ltd, a joint venture between Go-Ahead and Keolis.
- Stagecoach South Eastern Trains Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Stagecoach Group plc.

The shortlisted bidders have until March 2018 to submit their bids for how they intend to deliver the services and requirements specified by the Department. The winning bidder is expected to be announced in Autumn 2018, with the new franchise scheduled to commence in April 2019.

Canterbury



4

Our Vision

4. Objectives of the Franchise

Alongside this stakeholder briefing document, the Government is publishing its Strategic Vision for Rail, setting out how we will work with the rail sector to deliver the best possible journeys for passengers, create new opportunities for our economy and our communities, and improve value and efficiency. It describes the reforms this Government will implement to join up across teams working on 'track' and 'train' to place passengers' interests at the heart of every decision the rail industry takes, and to offer new and better journeys by investing and expanding where it is good value to do so.

The Department has developed the specification for the next South Eastern franchise around the needs of passengers and to deliver this broader vision for rail in the UK.

Within the consultation document, the Secretary of State proposed specific objectives for this franchise, which were designed to secure more reliable, high quality passenger services on the South Eastern network. Based on collaboration with Network Rail, local authorities, Transport for London and passenger groups, as well as your feedback, our objectives for the franchise include:

- Making more space for passengers.
- Improving performance.
- Making passengers feel like valued customers.
- Improving connectivity.
- Improving the timetable.
- Simplifying fares and ticketing.
- Improving stations.
- Working with others.
- Capability.
- Sustainability.





5

Consultation
Responses

5. Consultation Responses

The South Eastern franchise consultation ran from 14 March to 30 June 2017. It sought to:

- Inform stakeholders of the planned process and timescales for awarding the new South Eastern franchise.
- Provide stakeholders with background information about the current train service.
- Seek views on the challenges currently facing the South Eastern franchise, and our options for improving the franchise.

The consultation was published on the Department for Transport website, leaflets were distributed at stations, and the consultation received significant local press coverage. It was extended from the previous deadline of the 23 May 2017, in order to allow time to reinstate the public consultation events which were cancelled due to the restrictions on the Department's activities during the General Election.

Public events were held for local people to ask questions about the franchising process, discuss options for the future specification, and put forward their views. Stakeholder events were aimed at local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, local businesses, local rail user and transport groups, and other relevant organisations.

The events were held in Maidstone, Chatham and Woolwich, with wider public consultation events hosted in Central London, Lewisham, Hastings, Sevenoaks, Gravesend and Canterbury. Posters and announcements at local stations and major interchanges, newspaper advertisements and social media were also used to make direct contact with the public.

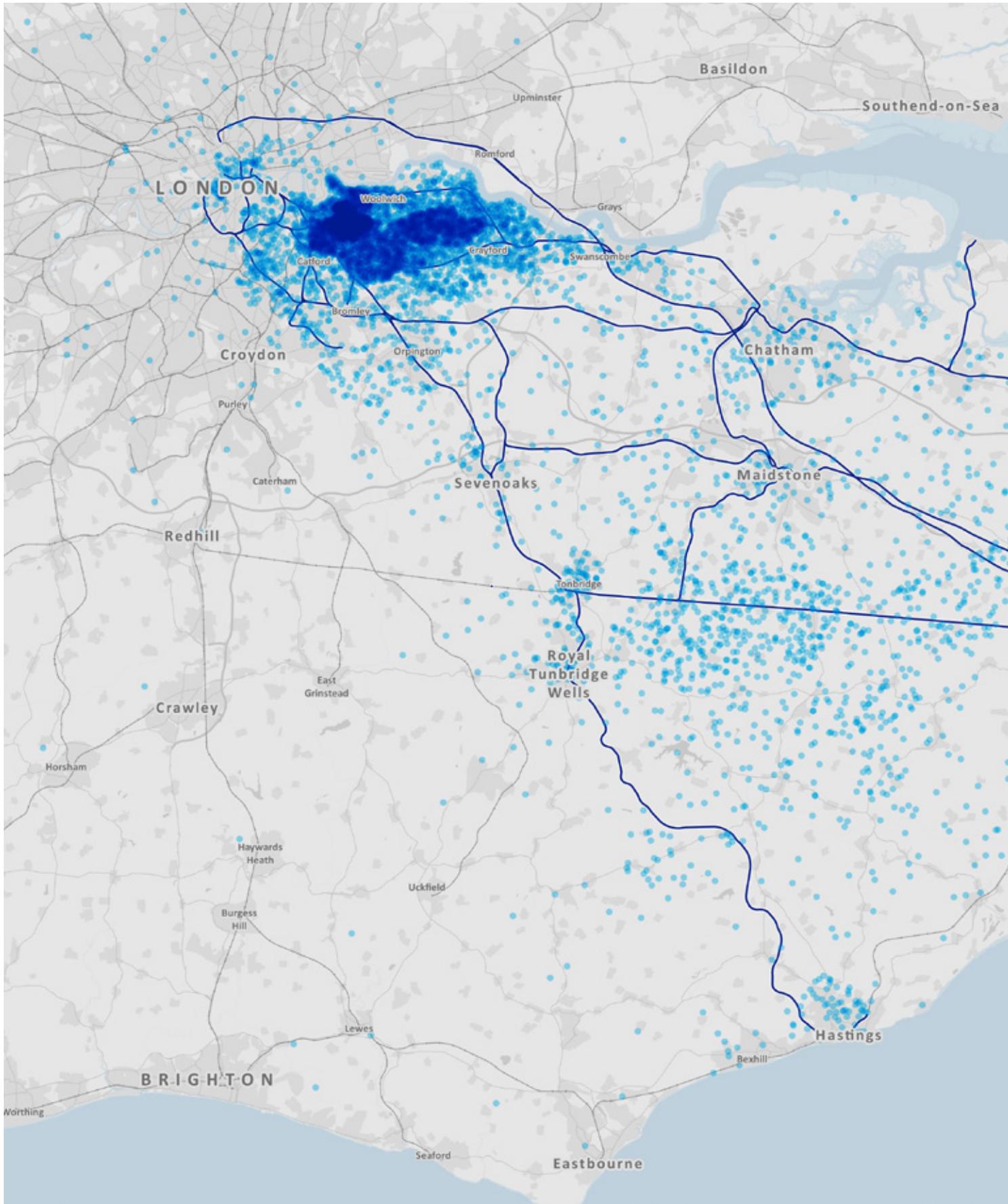
Response Type	Number of Responses
Email	4,726
Online Questionnaire	5,679
Letter	135
Total	10,540

Table 5.1: Breakdown of Public Responses

More than 10,000 responses to the consultation were received, as documented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Petitions regarding the future of services on the North Kent and Bexleyheath Lines, with 28,678 signatures, and improved access at Canterbury West station, with 134 signatures, were also received.

Stakeholder Category	Number of Responses
County Council/Unitary Authority	4
London Borough	5
Borough/District Council	16
Parish/Town Council	31
MP/Prospective Parliamentary Candidate	18
LEP/Economic Partnership	7
Local Residents Group	28
Community Rail Partnership	4
Consumer Watchdog	2
Educational/Medical Establishment	12
Rail User Group	20
Campaign Group	12
Trade Union	3
Transport for London	1
London Assembly Transport Committee	1
Local Political Party	6
Cllr/London Assembly Member	6
Transport Body	5
Business/Chamber of Commerce	15
Developer	9
Transport Operator	3
Transport Investor	1
Disability Association	3
Total	212

Table 5.2: Breakdown of Stakeholder Responses



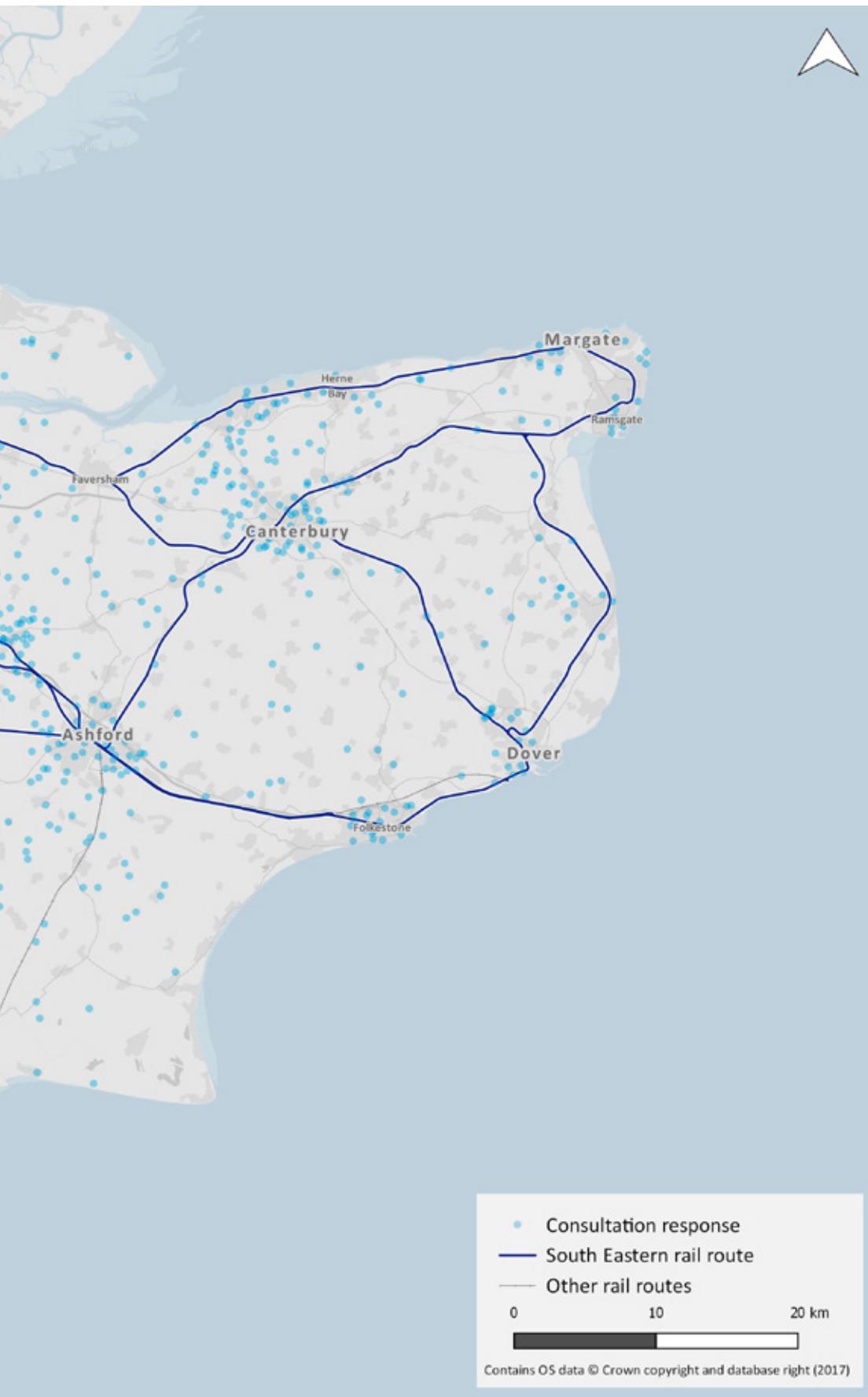


Figure 5.1: Map of Consultation Respondents: each dot represents one response

The consultation offered respondents an opportunity to comment on a wide range of issues, for example how to improve the passenger experience, how the train timetable could better serve their journeys, and how to provide additional capacity.

Figure 5.1 on the previous page displays the geographic distribution of responses, with each dot representing one response.



Main themes

The consultation asked 24 questions, grouped into several categories:

- A Franchise priorities
- B Providing extra space for passengers
- C Improving customer service
- D Simplifying fares and ticketing
- E Improving access and facilities at stations
- F Speeding up longer journeys
- G Difficult journeys and new services
- H Timetable simplification and London terminals
- I Alliancing and engagement
- J Private sector investment
- K Looking to the future

Few respondents commented on every topic, with the majority focusing on proposed changes to the train service. Respondents highlighted the need to ensure more space for passengers, and to improve customer service. There was opposition to proposals to reduce journey times in Kent and East Sussex by reducing stops at less well used stations, and to reduce the choice of central London destinations served by individual stations to provide a more regular and reliable service e.g. by moving to a single choice of London terminal station.

Chapters 5A – 5J outline how your thoughts have informed the specification, structured in line with the themes above. Figures in the publication refer to the number of people who responded to each question in the online consultation form, or who specifically addressed that topic within their email or postal response.

5A. Franchise Priorities

1

Do our priorities correctly reflect your views?

5,775 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

We outlined our priorities for the South Eastern franchise in the consultation document, based on a review of the existing franchise and discussions with Transport Focus, London TravelWatch, Network Rail, local authorities, passenger groups and Transport for London. Our priorities were:

- Making trains run on time.
- Providing more space for passengers.
- Improving passenger satisfaction.
- Limiting the number of late-running or cancelled trains.
- Improving communication for passengers, particularly when things go wrong.
- Optimising current and planned infrastructure to add services, lengthen trains and reduce journey times where possible.
- Taking full advantage of the new Elizabeth Line and Thameslink routes to provide more capacity, and revise service patterns.

Your response

37% of respondents agreed with these priorities, while 63% disagreed. Given the strength of the response to the proposal to reduce the choice of London terminals served by individual stations, together with the proposal to remove stops at less-used stations to create faster journey times, we suspect that this influenced how respondents replied to this question.

Most comments that respondents provided did broadly align with the franchise priorities, and were focused on providing more seats, reducing fares, increasing capacity and reducing delays.

Figure 5A.1 outlines the broad priorities of respondents. Some also identified a number of additional priorities, including improved rolling stock and stations, part-time season tickets, and improved connectivity.

Our response

Our plans will tackle the key priorities that you identified for the South Eastern Franchise, including providing more space on trains, improving reliability and removing first class seating to free up more space for all passengers, as outlined in detail in further chapters.

Greater use of smartcard ticketing, including the introduction of part-time season tickets, will allow passengers to always get the best fare for their journey, which together with better, more reliable services will help ensure that passengers always feel that travelling by train represents good value for money.

The Department has fully taken into account passengers’ views regarding reducing the choice of London termini from individual stations to increase the reliability and frequency of the train service. We will not proceed with the option of moving to a single London terminal.

We do, however, need to make some limited changes to a small number of services in order to facilitate the introduction of new Thameslink services, as well as to deliver a much more reliable and higher capacity service that meets the requirements of all passengers. These changes are outlined in detail in Chapter 5H.

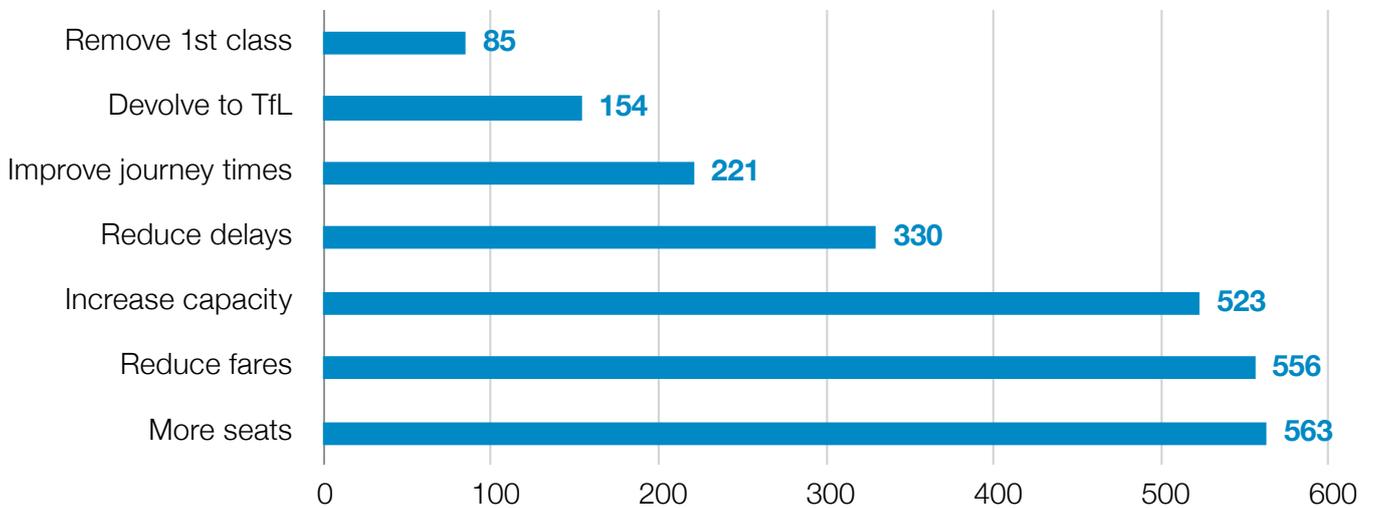


Figure 5A.1: Comments on “Do our priorities represent your views?”

5B. Space for Passengers

2

Do you agree that more space is needed for passengers at the busiest times of day?

5,866 people responded to this question

3

What comments, if any, do you have on options for providing more space through:

- a) Longer trains?
- b) Metro style carriages with larger entrances and more standing room and handholds?

3,847 and 3,343 people responded to these questions respectively

4

Would you support removing First Class seating on the busiest routes to provide more space?

5,849 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

More passengers are likely to travel on Metro and High Speed services in the future, and we outlined a series of options to increase capacity. These included:

- Extending Metro trains to 12 coaches, rather than 10 or 8, and providing more seats on High Speed services.
- Introducing modern, high capacity, ‘metro-type’ trains – such as those seen on London Overground – to provide additional capacity through a better balance of seating and standing room, with wider doors to facilitate speedier boarding and alighting at stations.
- Removing first class seating to provide more room for all passengers.



Your response

More space

Both passengers and stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that more space was needed during peak periods, with 90% of respondents agreeing and only 10% disagreeing, as shown in Figure 5B.1.

Many individuals noted that demand exceeded capacity, and that additional development expected within the franchise area (notably at Ebbsfleet, in Lewisham and in South East London) would result in worse overcrowding.

Longer trains

Respondents were also resolutely in favour of longer trains, with the only comments relating to ensuring longer trains were delivered. A small number of responses also noted that infrastructure limitations could prevent longer trains (e.g. on the line into Victoria) or that trains were already of maximum length.

Metro-style carriages

Respondents were more split on introducing 'Metro-style' carriages: while more respondents were in favour than opposed, a significant number noted that they were only suitable for short journeys, and that there was a need for more seats. Some also stressed the difficulty that a lack of seats would create for those who are unable to stand for long periods.

First Class

Removing first class was highly popular with respondents, with many noting that it was a poor use of space, not needed for short journeys and had limited demand.

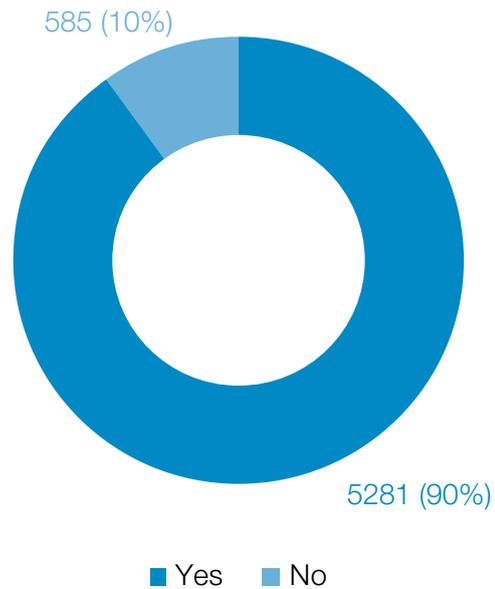


Figure 5B.1: Comments on "Do you agree that more space is needed for passengers at the busiest times?"

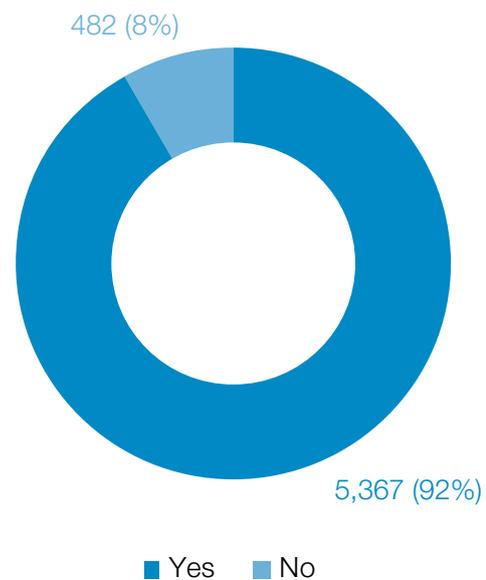


Figure 5B.2: Views on "Would you support removing First Class seating on the busiest routes to provide more space?"

Our response

The Department recognises the essential requirement to deliver more capacity on overcrowded services, and has made this a key franchise objective.

By Spring 2018, the redevelopment of London Bridge station will be completed which, together with power supply enhancements, upgraded signalling, and platform lengthening will allow the new operator to significantly increase capacity, alleviating overcrowding and catering for future growth.

The Department has developed a train service specification which integrates with these improvements to provide more space for passengers, and cater for current and forecast passenger growth. Trains into London in the morning rush-hour will deliver space for at least 40,000 additional passengers by December 2022, with more routes benefiting from 12-car trains for the first time.

Metro routes in and around London will benefit from new, Metro-style carriages, allowing standing passengers to travel in increased comfort, with easier boarding and alighting, reducing journey times. We will ensure that such trains retain priority seating to ensure that those who are not able to stand are not disadvantaged.

New Thameslink services linking Abbey Wood, Dartford and the Medway Towns to Blackfriars, Farringdon and St Pancras International will also commence in May 2018, providing a further uplift in capacity and providing new, more convenient destinations for passengers. Services on the Elizabeth Line will also begin to operate, with 12-high-capacity trains per hour running directly to Canary Wharf, Liverpool Street and the West End from Woolwich and Abbey Wood, offering connections onto the South Eastern network.

Bidders will be challenged to maximise capacity where they believe this is achievable, and will meet passenger demand. Reflecting your comments in the consultation, all South Eastern services will no longer offer first class accommodation from September 2020, in order to maximise space for all passengers.

5C. Improving Customer Service

5

What comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve customer service and the overall passenger experience?

4,560 people responded to this question

6

Do you have any other ideas or priorities for improving customer service?

3,794 people responded to this question

21

What approaches to customer service in other companies could be adopted by the next South Eastern train operator?

2,404 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

The Department recognises that, under the current operator, customer service has not reached the high standards that passengers expect. Passengers have rightly expressed frustration with poor standards of cleanliness, poor communication during periods of disruption, and service unreliability. We therefore set out proposals to improve:

- Journey planning.
- Ease of ticket purchase.
- On-board experience.
- Provision of information before, during and after the journey.
- Communication during disruption.
- Dealing with complaints.
- Providing compensation when things go wrong.

We also asked if you thought the next operator could learn from other high-volume transport businesses that provide good customer service (such as the airline industry).



Your response

Passengers and stakeholders broadly agreed that customer service should be improved on the franchise. While most respondents provided general comments about ‘improving the train service’, several noted specific areas for improvement, as shown in Figure 5C.1.

Improving the quality of communication, especially during periods of disruption, was frequently noted as a key customer service priority. Many passengers felt frustrated about the lack of information about the causes of disruption, and how to re-plan their journeys accordingly.

Stakeholders stressed the need for better station and on-train staffing, to provide reassurance and security to customers. Others noted the need to improve rolling stock, train cleanliness, Wi-Fi and passenger compensation.

Respondents also agreed that the next operator could learn about improving customer service from other transport companies, both within and outside the rail industry, particularly in the areas of staffing and clarity of communication.

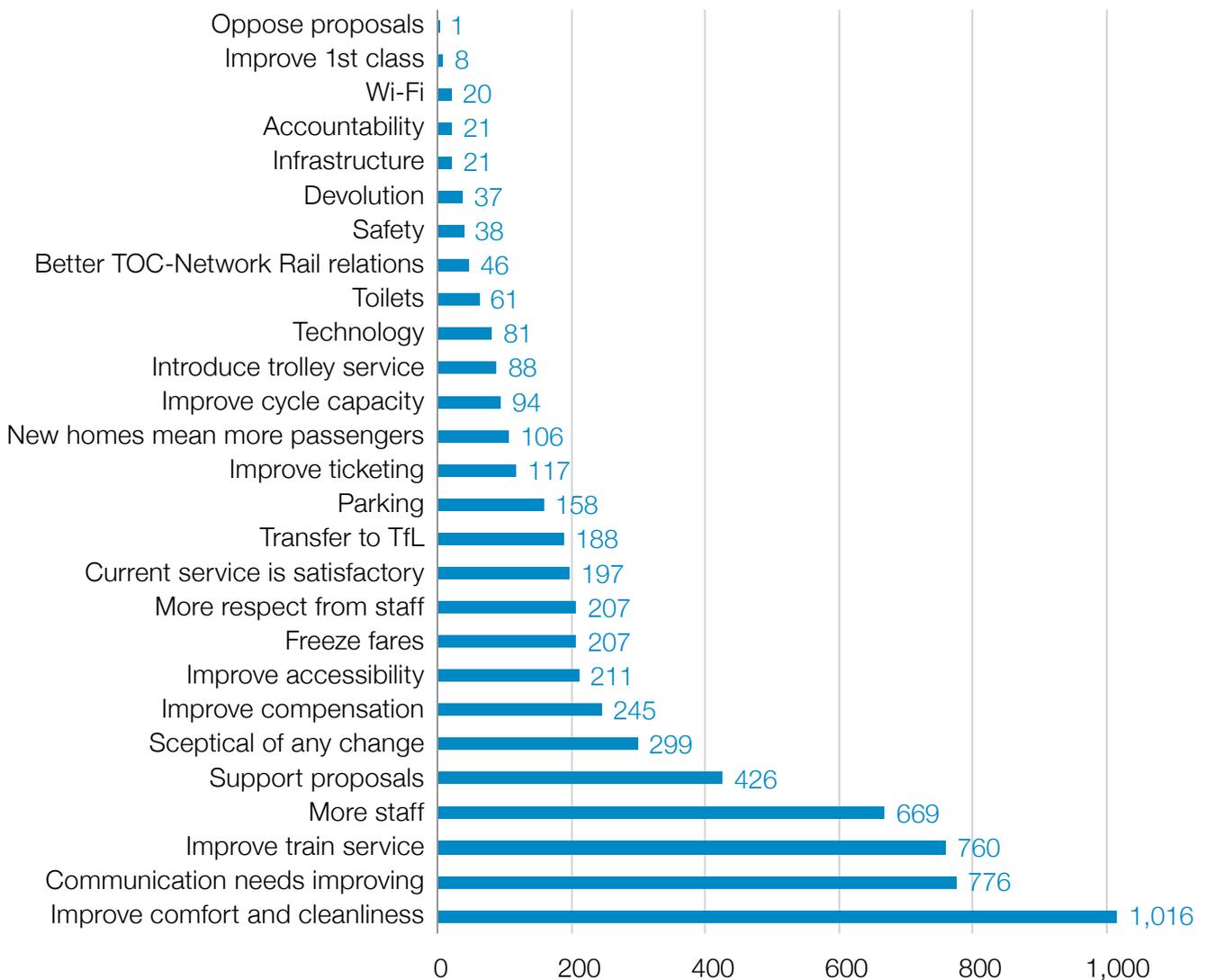


Figure 5C.1: Comments on “What comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve customer service and the overall passenger experience?”

Our response

The Department has specified a number of improvements within the ITT, which will lead to an enhanced customer experience.

Bidders will be incentivised to offer an exemplary experience for passengers. They will be subjected to a rigorous service quality regime – monitored through regular inspection of trains, stations and staff – and a customer satisfaction regime. Satisfaction will be benchmarked against agreed targets in the National Rail Passenger Survey, an independent, network-wide survey of rail passenger satisfaction undertaken by Transport Focus.

Bidders will have strong incentives to meet challenging targets for improvements:

- Station and train ambience and cleanliness, including lighting, seating, shelters, parking and toilets.
- Provision of information, including help points, information screens at stations, and availability of Wi-Fi.
- Quality of information during disruption.
- Availability, visibility and helpfulness of staff at stations and on trains.
- Provision of ticket machines and open ticket offices, and manning of ticket gates.

Bidders will also be required to provide consistent Wi-Fi coverage across the network, so that passengers are able to use email and browse the internet seamlessly for at least 90% of their journey.

Bidders will also have to engage with passengers and local communities to improve the passenger experience, including allocating a dedicated £12 million fund for Customers and Communities Improvement Schemes (CCIS), which will be used to deliver non-commercial improvements in local station facilities and services in consultation with the local community.

5D. Simplifying Fares and Ticketing

7

What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?

3,590 people responded to this question

8

What else could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?

2,998 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

Ticket buying habits are changing, with more passengers purchasing online, from ticket machines or using smartcards. We outlined our requirements that:

- Passengers must have access to the full range of tickets.
- Passengers be provided with the information required to choose the ticket best suited for their journeys.

We also outlined our expectation that the future operator would introduce more modern payment methods, such as better smartcard ticketing, pay as you go travel and/or barcode solutions.

Your response

Respondents identified that they would like to see better value-for-money from travelling by rail, with customers especially unhappy with the cost of travelling when they spent large amounts of time standing.

Several stakeholders, together with individuals, requested better fare options for those who travel regularly by train but not five-days-a-week, such as part-time season tickets or the introduction of carnets. Many requested the extension of 'smart ticketing' across the franchise area.

Many also agreed with our proposals to simplify ticketing where possible, and ensure that passengers are better able to choose the ticket most suited for their journey. Passengers reiterated that they would like to see improved provision and more intelligent ticket machines that clearly advertise the full range of tickets. Improved compensation arrangements – such as automated delay repay – were also requested.

Although the introduction of smart ticketing was broadly supported by respondents, some passengers would prefer to continue using ticket offices, and requested that current ticket office hours be retained and/or expanded.

Our response

The Department understands that passengers would like better value-for-money for their journey, and have therefore specified a series of improvements that will improve the delivery of the services they have purchased. In addition, it is government policy that fares across the rail network, including South Eastern services, will be frozen in real terms until 2020.

Easier, simpler fares

Bidders will be required to make rail fares easier to understand, and better suited to passengers’ needs. This will include a product which offers customers that travel regularly – but not five-days-a-week – a better value for money option than purchasing multiple return tickets (such as a carnet system).

Information on ticket types and restrictions must also be consistent and easily accessible, so that passengers are always able to select the most appropriate ticket for their journey.

Bidders will be incentivised to maximise their ticketing offer to customers, for example by allowing annual season ticket holders to spread the cost of their ticket across the year.

Better smart ticketing

Bidders will also be set ambitious targets for the implementation of a modern, smart ticketing system which offers passengers an easier, more attractive way to make their journey without having to queue at a ticket machine or ticket office. The new operator will also be required to trial Pay-As-You-Go ticketing in the Medway Towns (such as through an Oyster-type card or Contactless payment card) to ensure ticketing is as seamless as possible.

Improved compensation

Under the new franchise, compensation will be payable if passengers’ journeys are delayed by more than 15 minutes – down from the current 30 minutes Delay Repay scheme – ensuring that customers are better compensated if they are inconvenienced, and incentivising the operator to improve performance.

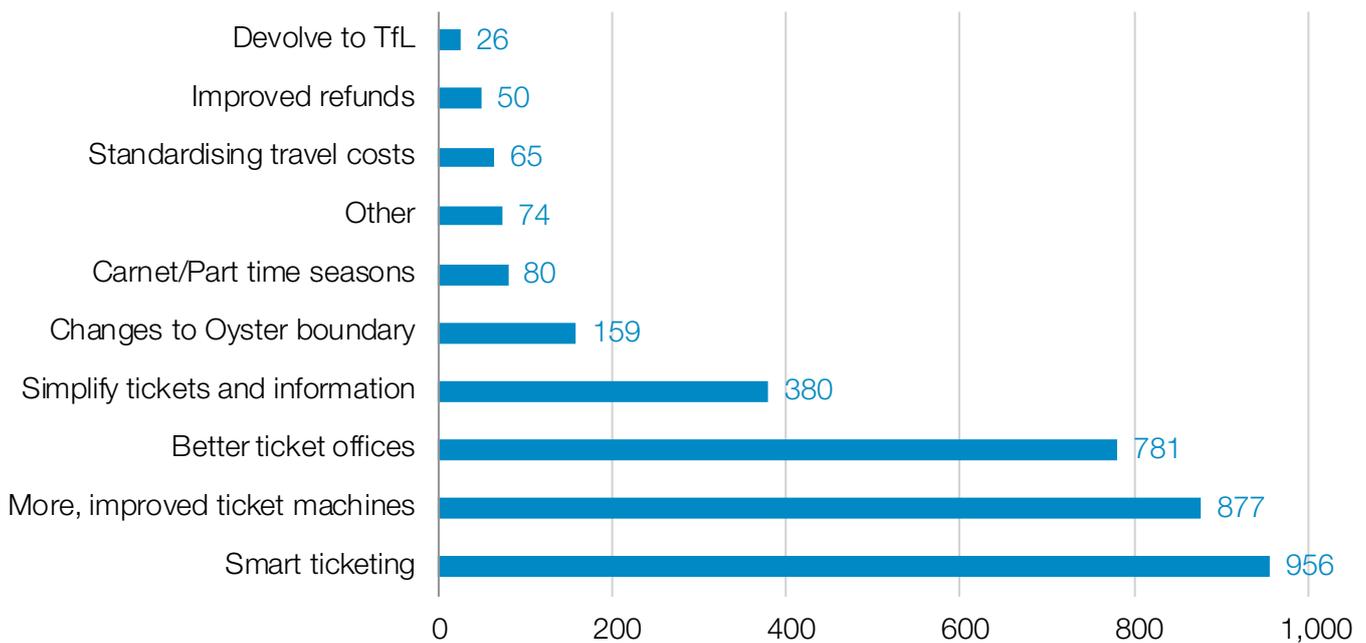


Figure 5D.1: Comments on “What else could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?”

5E. Improving Access and Facilities at Stations

9

What further comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve access and facilities at stations?

10

What more could be done to improve access and provide facilities for those with disabilities or additional needs?

Responses to these two questions have been considered together, as answers to both were very similar and responses often cross-referenced each other. **2,795** people responded to these questions.

Our thoughts

We recognise that, at some stations on the South Eastern network, accessing services or changing trains is difficult for those with accessibility needs.

We want to make stations accessible for all passengers, especially those with additional needs. Our consultation document outlined how we intended to:

- Identify solutions to improve station access and interchange for those with specific accessibility needs, which we recognise is a problem at some stations.
- Improve customer assistance systems so that passengers can always receive the support they require.

We also outlined a series of improvements to station facilities, to improve the experience of passengers. This included:

- Better cycling and walking access.
- More car and covered cycle parking.
- More seats and shelters.
- Improved toilet facilities.
- Improved security.
- Better use of the existing land and buildings for both commercial and community purposes.

Your response

Respondents broadly supported our proposals to improve access and facilities at stations, including for those with additional needs.

Improved step-free access was most commonly mentioned, with respondents usually identifying their own station as in need of improvements in this area. Many respondents also noted individual improvements to station facilities – such as toilets,

seating, barriers and signage – that they felt should be taken forward. Several respondents – including through a 134 signature petition – called for the provision of a new station entrance at Canterbury West.

Key themes highlighted by respondents are summarised in Figure 5E.1.

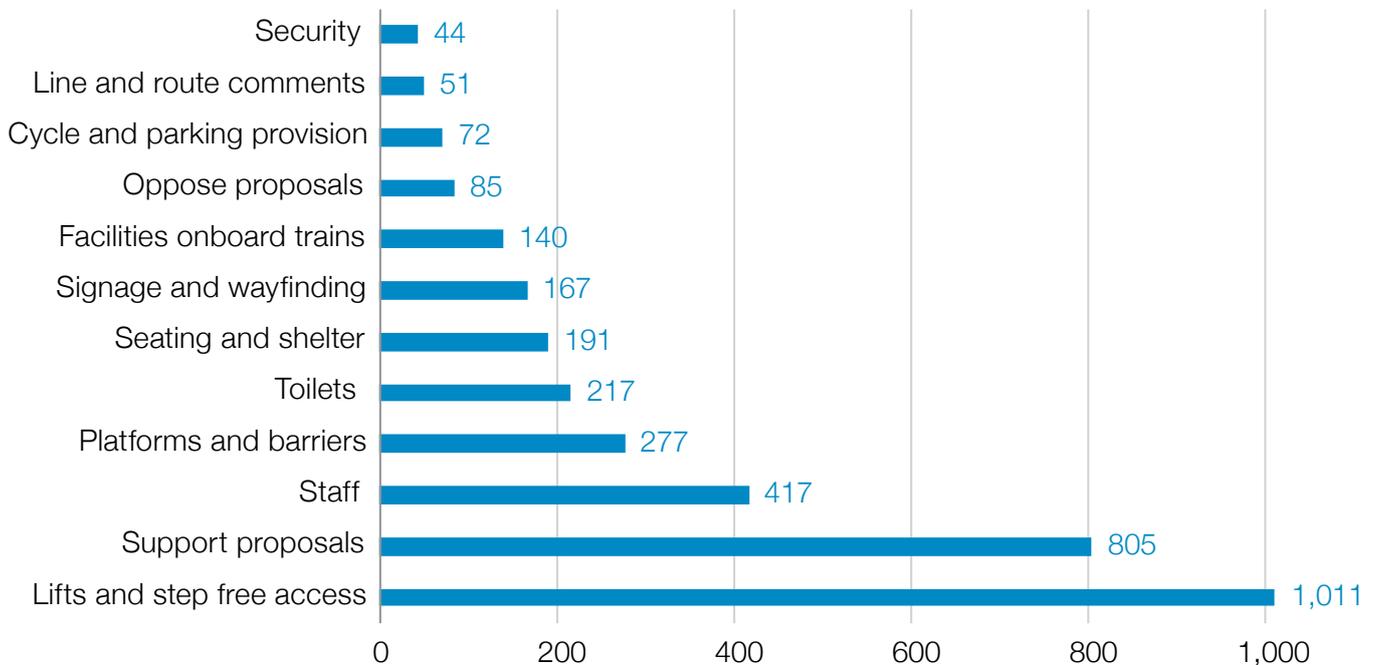


Figure 5E.1: Comments on “What further comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve access and facilities at stations?”

Our response

Our proposals will deliver a range of improvements to stations and facilities, including improved access for those with disabilities or additional needs.

More than £6.5m will be invested across the franchise as part of a Station Improvement Fund, which will improve accessibility, improved security (such as CCTV) and better facilities for passengers (such as enhanced information displays, shelters and toilets).

Bidders will be required to set out where and how this fund could be best spent for maximum passenger benefit. Seven stations are also

expected to benefit from investment under the ‘Access for All’ programme, which will deliver step-free access at Bexley, Canterbury East, Chatham, Hither Green, Peckham Rye, Plumstead and St Mary Cray by 2020.

Station facilities, including toilets, lighting and seating, will also form a key component of the Service Quality Regime outlined in Chapter 5C, with the future operator required to meet challenging benchmarks in station maintenance, cleanliness and customer satisfaction.

5F. Speeding Up Longer Distance Journeys

11

How far do you support, or oppose, the extension of High Speed services from London St. Pancras to Hastings, Bexhill, and Rye, where this would represent value for money to the taxpayer?

5,704 people responded to this question

12

How far do you support, or oppose, reducing journey times to key destinations in Kent and East Sussex, by reducing stops at less well used intermediate stations to create hourly fast services?

6,139 people responded to this question

13

If you support this proposal, which services do you think would most benefit from this approach?

840 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

Some services to Kent and East Sussex have long journey times in relation to the distance covered by the route, such as between London and Hastings. We therefore set out a number of options for improving journey times, including:

- Reducing journey times on existing mainline routes by removing calls at less well-used stations to deliver fast services once per hour, such as between Tonbridge and Hastings/Ashford.
- Operating High Speed services between London St Pancras and Hastings, Bexhill and Rye, via Ashford.

The Department recognised that while this would deliver faster journeys, it would also have the potential to inconvenience passengers that currently use those intermediate stations.



Your response

High Speed services to Hastings

Approximately 25% of respondents were in favour of investment in High Speed services to Hastings, whilst 16% were opposed. The remaining responses were largely neutral.

Support was strongest in those areas that would benefit most from faster journey times to London: Hastings, Bexhill and Ashford. Those who opposed the proposal generally considered that the cost would be too high, and that the funds could be better spent elsewhere.

Faster journey times by reducing stops at less well-used stations

Approximately 48% were opposed to the concept of reducing journey times between key destinations in Kent and East Sussex by reducing stops at less well used stations, to create hourly fast services.

Opposition to the proposal was focused within the rural areas along the Tonbridge – Ashford line, which was suggested as a possible route in consultation document. Respondents and stakeholders noted that:

- Reducing stops at rural stations would result in significant inconvenience to local people, especially young people and the elderly who have little alternative but to travel by train.
- Significant housing growth is planned around rural stations (such as at Headcorn), which will increase demand for rail travel.
- Any reduction in stops would increase congestion and air pollution, as rail users drive or park at stations elsewhere.

However, some stakeholders did support the proposal in the interest of speeding up journey times (such as along the Hastings – Tonbridge – London route), although stressed there was a balance to be struck between local and regional connectivity, and a need for good local consultation of those affected.

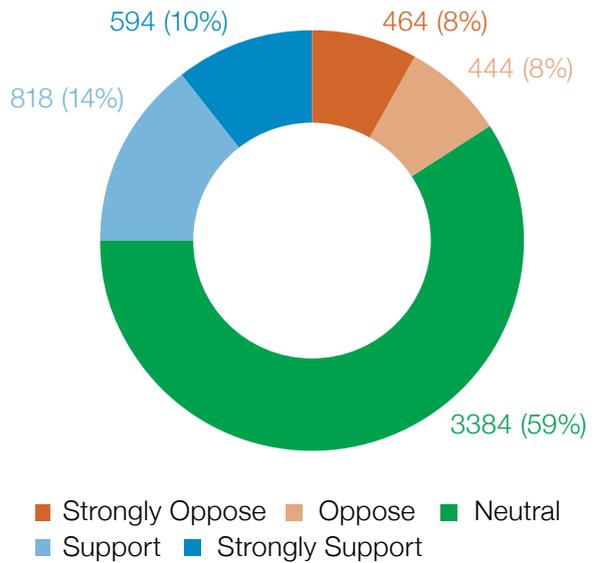


Figure 5F.1: Views on “How far do you support, or oppose, the extension of High Speed services from London St. Pancras to Hastings, Bexhill, and Rye, where this would represent value for money to the taxpayer?”

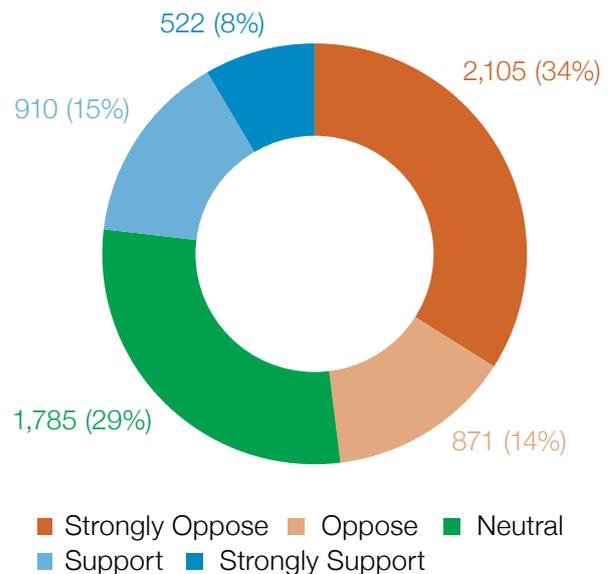


Figure 5F.2: Views on “How far do you support reducing journey times to key destinations in Kent and East Sussex, by reducing stops at less well used intermediate stations, and where would you like to see this?”

Our response

Faster journey times by reducing stops at less well-used stations

The Department recognises the opposition to reducing the number of stops at less-well used stations (such as between Tonbridge and Ashford), and the disruption this would cause to local communities who rely on their rail service.

We have therefore decided not to specify this option, with all stations between Tonbridge and Ashford being served by at least two trains per hour throughout the day. All stations between Tunbridge Wells and Hastings will continue to receive at least one train per hour.

Our specification will instead deliver faster journey times to key destinations in Kent and East Sussex through additional, faster services to Ashford, via Tonbridge.

Two new services per hour will operate between London, Tonbridge and Ashford, allowing Hastings services to no longer call at Orpington, Sevenoaks and Hildenborough, speeding up journey times to Battle, St Leonards and Hastings. Several stations will therefore benefit from faster, more frequent services to London throughout the day with additional peak services:

- Tonbridge – eight fast trains per hour (including two non-stop) to London Bridge.
- Sevenoaks – six fast trains per hour.
- Orpington – at least four fast trains per hour.
- Hildenborough – at least two fast trains per hour to London.

We will also incentivise bidders to develop innovative proposals for further reducing journey times on Main Line services including peak Hastings services.

High Speed services to Hastings

The Department recognises the strong strategic case for reducing journey times between Hastings, Bexhill and London via High Speed services, which has the potential to support local economic growth, deliver new homes and jobs and transform the image of Bexhill and Hastings as a place to do business.

As such, bidders have been encouraged in the ITT to put forward ambitious and innovative proposals to deliver High Speed services and/or faster journey times between London St Pancras, Hastings and Bexhill.



5G. Difficult Journeys and New Services

14

Which journeys do you make today which are difficult:

- a) By rail?
- b) By road, which would be easier by rail?

2,152 people responded to this question

15

Which additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?

2,760 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

We are keen to improve journeys by rail which passengers consider are difficult today, for example, where they require several interchanges. We also wish to encourage those who use other forms of transport to use rail services by making their journeys easier by rail.

We are encouraging bidders to think broadly about how the South Eastern franchise connects with other transport networks to facilitate quicker, and more convenient journeys. This could include:

- Additional trains in the evenings and weekends.
- New direct services (where direct links are not currently available).
- Better integration with other train operators, London Underground, the Docklands Light Railway, Tramlink and local bus services.
- Improved journey times on particular routes where passengers have to change trains to reach their ultimate destination.



Your response

Respondents generally identified a range of additional services they wanted to see on the South Eastern network, including faster and more frequent services on existing routes.

Many noted that journey times had increased in recent years, and requested a return to faster journey times. Others requested through trains beyond London, to destinations outside of the capital. Some also took the opportunity to stress that they wanted services to the current range of London terminal destinations retained. These responses are summarised in Figure 5G.1.

Many stakeholders stressed their preference for improved connectivity on orbital routes, and those not involving travel to London. Improved connectivity to Gatwick Airport, including new services from Redhill/Gatwick to Tonbridge, Maidstone and Ashford were frequently mentioned. Stakeholders also requested frequency enhancements on some rural services (such as the Medway Valley Line), and improved connectivity to new Thameslink and Elizabeth Line services at Abbey Wood.

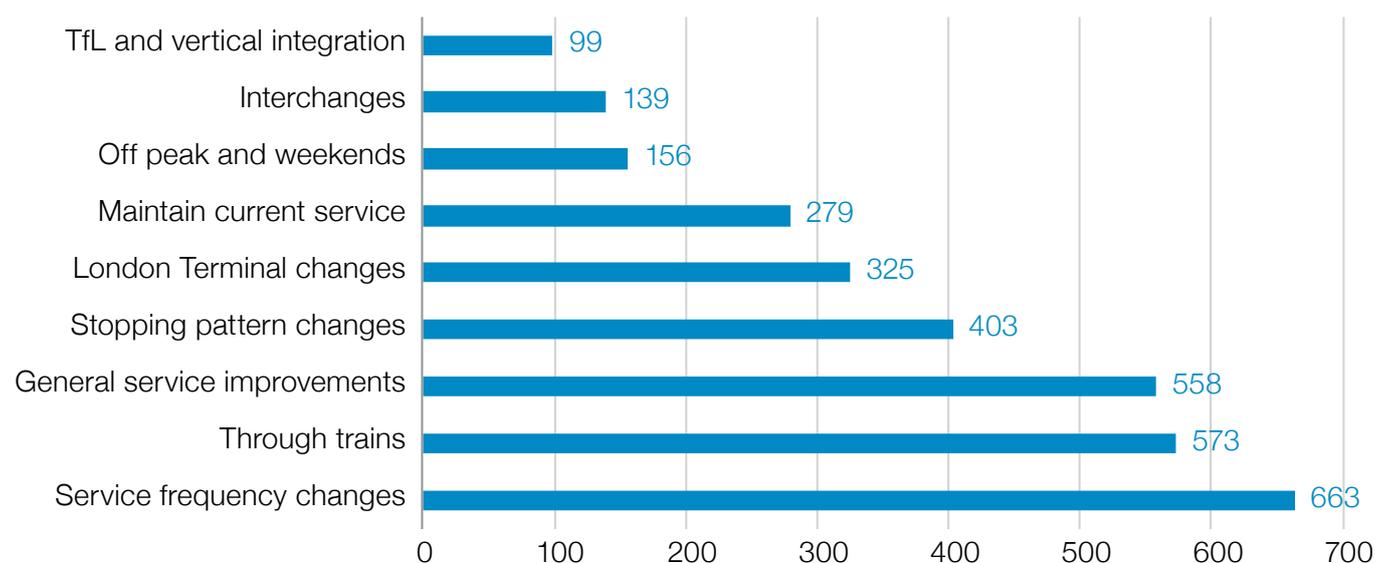


Figure 5G.1: Views on “Which additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?”

Our response

The Department has specified a number of service and frequency enhancements across the South Eastern franchise area, designed to make travelling by rail as convenient for passengers as possible. All-day frequency of services between Ashford and Tonbridge will double, and faster services will operate to Hastings and Bexhill from London, boosting connectivity to the East Sussex Coast. The Medway Valley Line will benefit from two trains per hour all-day between Strood, Maidstone, Paddock Wood and Tonbridge for the first time, improving local connectivity across Kent and access to the Medway Towns.

Many routes will also benefit from an improved Sunday service, and in the Metro area, the frequency of services between Victoria and Lewisham will double to four trains per hour all day. ‘Turn-up-and-go’ travellers will no longer have to check the timetable, or experience long waiting times, prior to travelling.

Services will also operate between the Bexleyheath and Sidcup lines to Abbey Wood via Slade Green, offering connectivity to new Elizabeth Line services, and bidders will also be encouraged to put forward their own proposals to operate additional services which benefit passengers. This could include improved radial links, or better use of High Speed 1 to offer faster access to London.

5H. Timetable Simplification and London Terminal Changes

16

How far do you support, or oppose, options to simplify the timetable?
5,499 people responded to this question

17

How far do you support, or oppose, options to reduce the choice of central London destinations served from individual stations with the aim of providing a more regular, evenly spaced timetable, and a more reliable service?
10,410 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

Service patterns on some routes are complex, with services running at different frequencies and to different destinations through the day, often not at equal intervals. We outlined proposals for a more effective timetable, which could deliver:

- More reliable and punctual services.
- More regular intervals between services, throughout the day.
- More passenger capacity overall.
- Reduced knock-on delays to services across Kent, East Sussex and the Medway Towns.

However, there is a limit to the extent we could improve the timetable and improve the reliability of the railway without reducing the number of central London terminals served from individual stations.

This is because overlapping routes caused by operating services to a range of London terminals make it harder to timetable trains reliably, as trains may have to wait for others to cross key junctions (such as Lewisham) before they can continue their journey. This can lead to longer journey times and limit the number of services that can be run. It is also a major cause of delays to services.

Therefore, we also asked respondents if they would be in favour of reducing the choice of central London terminals served from individual stations, with the aim of providing a more regular and reliable service. We recognised that the loss of direct connections could, however, cause inconvenience to passengers by requiring them to change their usual journey patterns.

Your response

Timetable Simplification

Opinion towards simplifying the timetable was broadly split, and many responses were neutral, since respondents did not know exactly how the timetable would change.

Respondents favoured more regular intervals between trains, such as a four trains per hour throughout the day with a consistent 15-minute period between them, and a timetable which led to more reliable services.

However, many respondents were opposed to timetable simplification if it resulted in a reduction in the choice of London terminals served by individual stations.

Single London Terminals

Approximately 89% of respondents to this question were opposed to a reduction in the choice of central London destinations served from individual stations, with the aim of providing a more regular and reliable service. Respondents stressed:

- That they preferred to retain their existing choice of London terminals, and were strongly opposed to moving towards all services operating to a single London terminal.
- Train services on the network have always operated to a range of terminals, and passengers had often chosen to move to the area because of this flexibility.
- Their concern that access to Kings College Hospital (at Denmark Hill) could be more difficult, making it harder for elderly people or those suffering from illness to travel.
- Their concern that overcrowding at Lewisham and London Bridge could worsen as increased numbers of passengers change trains.

- Passengers could potentially pay more for their journeys than now if they were forced to interchange onto London Underground services.
- Services to Cannon St are only useful for those commuting to the City, and not those travelling elsewhere in the capital.

Opposition to the proposal was greatest within the Metro area, especially within the Blackheath, Eltham and Bexleyheath areas of South East London. Respondents in Kent and East Sussex also stressed that they valued their peak-time services to Cannon Street.

Conversely, a small number of respondents noted that the proposal could improve performance by reducing junction conflicts, and ensuring that more services could be operated.

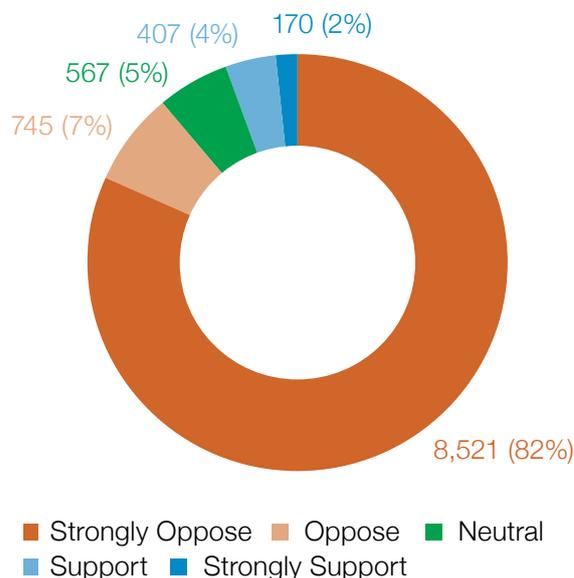


Figure 5H.1: Views on “How far do you support options to reduce choice of central London destinations served from individual stations with the aim of providing a more regular and reliable service?”

Our response

The Department has listened carefully to all passengers, taking fully into account their views including around reducing the choice of London terminals from individual stations to increase the overall reliability and frequency of the train service. A significant majority were opposed to the concept of moving to a single London terminal, and we will not proceed with this change.

However, we do need to make some more limited changes to services to both facilitate new Thameslink services to Woolwich, Dartford and North Kent and Maidstone East, as well as ensure we can operate a much more reliable, resilient and higher capacity service to benefit all passengers.

If we do not make these minor changes, the service is likely to become more congested with more delays, as passenger numbers increase over the life of the next franchise.

We will therefore require bidders to make the following changes by 2022, subject to a successful future public consultation on detailed timetable proposals:

- **Bexleyheath Line** services would in future run to London Bridge, Waterloo East, Charing Cross and Cannon Street, with longer 10-12 car trains (which cannot fit into a number of stations on the route into Victoria). The small minority of passengers (around 1,100 in the peak) who currently travel directly to Victoria and Denmark Hill would change at Lewisham, where they would connect with more frequent services to Victoria.
- **Hayes Line** services would in future run to London Bridge, Waterloo East, Charing Cross and Victoria. The small minority of passengers (around 700 in the peak) who currently travel directly to Cannon Street would change at London Bridge.
- **North Kent Line** services to Charing Cross via Lewisham would in future run to London Bridge and Cannon Street, to facilitate new Thameslink services to London Bridge, Blackfriars, Farringdon and London St Pancras.
- **Sidcup Line** services will continue to run to Charing Cross, with Cannon Street services moving to peak times, reflecting the principal demand for these services is commuters. Outside peak hours, the small number of passengers for Cannon Street would change at London Bridge.

All Metro stations would retain a range of London station destinations. No passengers would have to pay more for their journey if they are required to interchange on South Eastern services, and journey times would be similar to today.

What are the benefits of these changes?

Reducing the number of trains that are required to cross each other's paths will mean that services via Lewisham can be much more reliable, resilient and faster. Simplifying the timetable will improve the performance and resilience of all services (not simply Suburban services), as well as Thameslink, allow more trains to operate, and allow them to run at more convenient, regular intervals. More than 80,000 passengers will benefit from these changes during peak hours.

- **Bexleyheath Line** passengers will benefit from an increased frequency to London Bridge, and Charing Cross, and increased capacity to Cannon Street. More frequent 12-car trains will be introduced, providing space for more than 10,000 additional passengers in the morning high peak hour, doubling the capacity provided.
- **Hayes Line** passengers will benefit from increased services in the shoulder peak, as well as more 10 and 12-car trains, with space for more than 7,000 additional passengers in the morning high peak hour, more than doubling the capacity provided. Passengers will also benefit from a new direct service to Victoria.
- **Sidcup Line** passengers will benefit from a new half-hourly all-day service between Crayford and Victoria, in addition to those currently operating to Charing Cross and Cannon Street. The Sidcup Line is one of the busiest lines, requiring additional services since longer trains alone would not meet growing demand.
- Passengers between **Lewisham, Denmark Hill, and Victoria** will benefit from an additional two trains per hour all-day, doubling the frequency from two to four trains per hour, increasing capacity into London and accessibility to Kings College Hospital (at Denmark Hill). 'Turn-up-and-go' travellers will no longer have to check the timetable prior to travelling, or experience long waiting times.

None of these benefits would be possible without these modest changes to London terminal destinations. These changes will enable us to deliver the modern, reliable, efficient service that passengers expect, and will transform the South Eastern network into the 21st century railway system passengers deserve.

51. Alliancing and Engagement

18

How far do you support, or oppose, plans for the train operator and Network Rail to form a close alliance with the aim of reducing delays and improving performance?

5,580 people responded to this question

19

What are your views on how this alliance should be incentivised and held to account for its performance?

2,630 people responded to this question

20

How would you prefer the next South Eastern operator to engage with you:

- a) As an individual?
- b) As an organisation (if appropriate)?

5,802 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

Passengers have suffered disruption from infrastructure works and poor performance for too long. Therefore, we will require a close alliance between Network Rail and the future operator, to improve collaboration and reduce delays.

Closer working would deliver a more modern, innovative and passenger-focused railway, creating shared incentives to focus on the most important objective: delivering reliable, punctual and high quality rail services for passengers.

Operators perform best when they fully understand the local markets and customers that they serve, and hence we set out our aim to achieve a more local focus in the new franchise.

We have already collaborated with Kent, Medway and East Sussex County Councils whilst developing the specification for the new franchise, and set out how we would like the new operator to engage fully with its passengers, placing them at the heart of their business and operations.



Your response

Alliancing

Approximately 69% of respondents were supportive of plans for a close alliance between Network Rail and the operator, in order to improve performance.

Respondents argued that this should be incentivised through clear common financial incentives (or ‘pain’/‘gain’ mechanisms) to ensure that the operator meets and exceeds its performance targets, with accountability generally to the Department. Some stakeholders argued that penalties should apply to both the operator and Network Rail, irrespective of cause, so that both are encouraged to focus on reducing delays rather than attributing them to each other.

Engagement

Passenger groups, councils and local authorities were strongly in favour of closer engagement with the future operator, so that they could be involved in any future service changes or station upgrades. Several councils requested the continuation of dedicated liaisons with the operator, and regular attendance at local meetings and ‘Meet the Manager’ events. There was also support for underutilised space at stations to be transferred to the local community, where practicable.

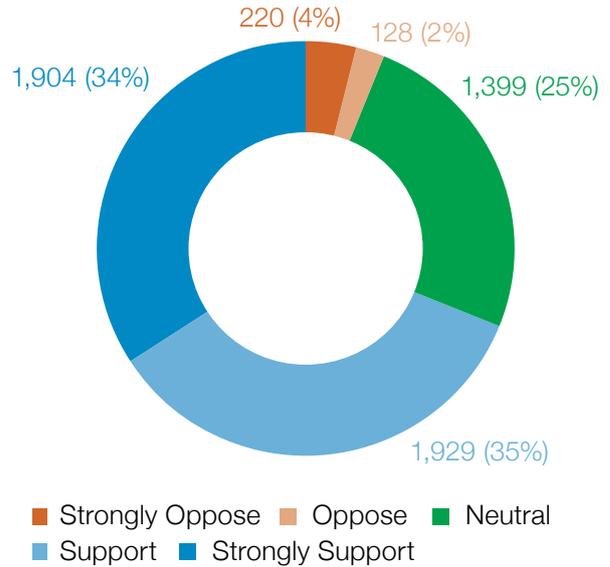


Figure 5I.1: Views on “How far do you support plans for the train operator and Network Rail to form a close alliance with the aim of reducing delays and improving performance and how should this be incentivised?”

Our response

Alliancing

The Department proposes to introduce a deeper working alliance between the new franchisee and Network Rail. Our proposals have been developed following detailed consultation with the railway industry, and designed explicitly to reduce delays, improve performance and increase customer satisfaction. Bidders will be required to:

- Put forward specific proposals for joint working – such as establishing joint operational control, performance and communications teams.
- Establish effective governance and agree to challenging performance targets with joint incentives.

Engagement

The Department wants the franchisee to work collaboratively for the benefit of passengers, local communities, and the taxpayer. Bidders will have to explain how they will work with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders to improve the door-to-door experience for passengers, and seek opportunities to access third-party funding for schemes.

There will also be a dedicated £12 million fund for Customers and Communities Improvement Schemes (CCIS), which will be used to deliver improvements in facilities and services in consultation with passengers and local communities.



5J. Private Sector Investment

22

Where do you think private sector investment would be of most benefit to the railway?
 2,827 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

Transforming a railway which blends Victorian era infrastructure with a rapidly growing population takes time and investment. While a large proportion of investment is delivered through established mechanisms, such as Government investment in the rebuilding of London Bridge station, there is also a role for new models of private funding, as is common on other types of transport infrastructure

We have sought views from rail operators, stakeholders, businesses and the public to consider new models of private funding, which could bring better services to passengers, such as longer franchises or specific investment in key projects.

Your response

Several aspects of the railway were identified by respondents where they believe private investment would be most suitable, including:

- New trains.
- Improvements/new stations and station facilities.
- Better infrastructure (such as electrification of the Marshlink Line).
- Improved reliability.

Several stakeholders in particular noted the current pressures on public resources, and highlighted how, over the longer term, private sector investment could help deliver large-scale infrastructure such as the electrification of the Marshlink Line and High Speed services between Hastings, Ashford and London St Pancras.

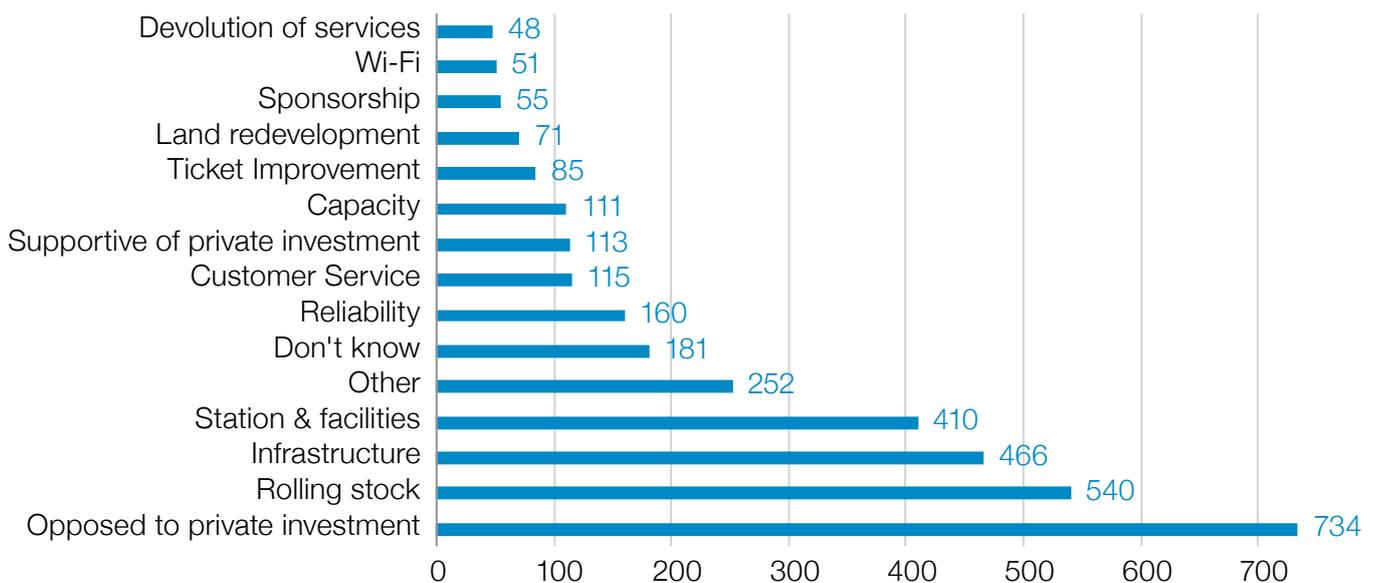


Figure 5J.1: Comments on “Where do you think private sector investment would be of most benefit to the railway?”

Our response

The Department believes that there are significant opportunities to secure private-sector investment to improve the railway, and deliver additional benefits for passengers, at minimal cost to the taxpayer.

Bidders will need to demonstrate their plans for collaborating with other organisations, both within and outside of the rail industry, to seek third party funding for new products or services that would have passenger benefits.

Private-sector funding is already used to help secure improvements for passengers, such as funding new rolling stock and new stations through third-party funding, and the Department would like to see this role expanded in the future.



5K. Looking to the Future

23

Should we consider using the more lightly used sections of the railway in a different way? If so, how should this be done?

1,188 people responded to this question

24

Looking to future, beyond this franchise, what, if any, benefits do you consider there would be for passengers from a franchise with a different geographical boundary?

1,778 people responded to this question

Our thoughts

Much of the South Eastern network runs to a pattern set many decades ago. Whilst the introduction of High Speed services in 2009 led to a recast of the timetable, and future Thameslink services will lead to another, many of the routes travelled by the majority of passengers will remain largely unchanged.

Technology and work practices may be very different in the future, and this will have implications for travel patterns and passenger expectations. More people, for example, may want to travel outside of regular commuting hours or travel elsewhere for work.

In the future, we will therefore consider whether the current geography of the franchise provides the best for passengers. Smaller franchises could allow new entrants into the market, and new technology could allow new services to be introduced.

Your response

Opinions towards changing the franchise boundaries were mixed. Whilst some argued that the current geographical boundaries made most sense, others argued that inner-suburban London services should have been devolved to Transport for London. Others called for a complete or partial change of ownership, calling for the franchise to be nationalised.

Some stakeholders in particular referred to specific routes which should be considered for inclusion,

such as Redhill to Tonbridge and Ashford to Hastings, especially if High Speed services were introduced to London St Pancras.

Few specifically responded to the question regarding lightly used sections of railway. Amongst those who did, the most common responses were about utilising lightly-used sections to allow faster services to overtake slower services, or for rail freight. Some also stressed that local users should be consulted, to identify new sources of demand.

Some respondents also stressed the role of the existing Community Rail Partnerships within Kent and East Sussex, saying they would like continued financial commitment and engagement with the CRPs to be provided by the new operator.

Our response

Bidders will be encouraged to develop innovative proposals for maximising passenger numbers on lightly-used railways, and will be required to present their strategies for working with the Kent Community Rail Partnership. We recognise the invaluable role of the Kent Community Rail Partnership in boosting ridership and improving the passenger experience, and have therefore more than doubled the funding they will receive from the new operator to support their initiatives.

The Department does not currently intend to change the boundary of the South Eastern franchise or 'remap' any services between franchises, although we will continue to explore options to do so if they deliver benefits for passengers.



6

Summary

6. Specification Summary

The Department has developed the South Eastern franchise specification first and foremost to provide reliable, high quality rail services that meet the needs and expectations of passengers.

Our proposals will accommodate the anticipated growth in demand, through lengthening trains and providing more space for passengers. Passengers will benefit from a better customer experience, improved fares and ticketing, and better stations and facilities, as requested by many respondents to this consultation.

Franchise Length

The franchise is planned to start in April 2019 and will operate for approximately 8 years, with an option for the Secretary of State to extend the term by one year.

We considered a number of factors when determining the length of the franchise, including dates for already planned infrastructure projects and existing leasing arrangements, the schedule for other franchise competitions, the effect that the length would have on the financial requirements of the franchisee, and comments from the consultation.

We believe that a core 8 years franchise period offers the best balance, providing continuity and opportunity for the franchisee to invest and improve services for passengers.

Train Services

We have developed a train service requirement to deliver significant enhancements to the current timetable, including additional capacity, more frequent trains, and journey time improvements. Longer trains into London in the morning rush-hour will deliver space for at least 40,000 additional passengers, with more services benefiting from 12-car trains.

Suburban routes in and around London will benefit from Metro-style trains, allowing standing passengers to travel in increased comfort, with easier boarding and alighting reducing journey times. We will ensure that such trains retain priority seating. Accessible toilets will be provided on all main line and High Speed services.

New Thameslink services linking Abbey Wood, Dartford and the Medway Towns to Central London will also commence in December 2018, providing a further uplift in capacity and providing new, more convenient destinations for passengers. Crossrail services will also begin to operate, with 12 high-capacity trains per hour running directly to Canary Wharf, Liverpool Street and the West End from Woolwich and Abbey Wood, with connections onto the South Eastern network.

We have listened carefully to all passengers, taking fully into account their views regarding the choice of London terminals from individual stations to increase the reliability and frequency of the train service. We will not proceed with the option of moving towards a single London terminal. However, we will require bidders to make limited changes to services to facilitate new Thameslink services, and deliver a much more reliable, resilient and higher capacity service. All Metro stations will retain a choice of London stations, and no passengers will be required to pay more for their journey if they need to interchange on South Eastern services.

Simplifying the timetable will enable us to significantly improve the reliability of the service by reducing operational conflicts at Lewisham, and deliver more services running at more convenient, regular intervals. Services between Victoria and Lewisham will also double in frequency to four trains per hour all-day, improving access to the hospitals at Denmark Hill, and delivering a 'turn-up-and-go' style service for the first time. Sunday services will be significantly improved, doubling on many routes.

Bidders will be incentivised to deliver faster services between London, Tonbridge, Bexhill and Hastings. Frequencies will also double to four trains per hour between Tonbridge and Ashford, broadly restoring the pre-HS1 service to London. Passengers on the Medway Valley Line will also benefit from a consistent two trains per hour all day for the first time.

We have also incentivised bidders to make proposals for further service enhancements, above the minimum specified requirement, where there would be benefit for passengers and sufficient demand.

More space for passengers

The South Eastern franchise experiences very high demand, with peak services into and out of London being particularly busy. Our analysis of forecast growth, discussion with key stakeholders, and the public consultation all showed that providing sufficient capacity to meet demand is one of the key priorities for passengers.

Improvements at London Bridge will be completed by 2018, and allow the new operator to significantly increase capacity. Services into London in the morning rush-hour will have capacity for at least 40,000 additional passengers, with many routes benefiting from longer 12-car trains.

Customer experience

Passengers rightly expect to get value for money for the price of their ticket, and much of this is to do with their journey experience. Passengers expect their train to arrive on time, and to be compensated appropriately when it doesn't. They expect modern facilities at stations and on board trains, and for those facilities to be maintained to a high standard.

Bidders will be required to deliver a high standard of customer service, so that passenger satisfaction will improve to meet the National Rail Passenger Survey targets set in the Franchise Agreement. Bidders will make proposals for improvements to trains and at stations, including for cleanliness and maintenance, as well as the provision of facilities, and the availability of staff.

Compensation for passengers if things go wrong will also be improved, so that they are entitled to payment if their train is delayed by more than 15 minutes – compared to 30 minutes currently – through a swift, simple, claims process. Wi-Fi coverage will be provided across the entire network, with bidders required to ensure that passengers are able to use email and browse the internet seamlessly for at least 90% of their journey.



Providing better stations

Your responses to the consultation show that stations and their environment can have a significant effect on the passenger experience. We have set targets, based on Transport Focus's National Rail Passenger Survey, for bidders to consistently improve the passenger satisfaction with stations over the course of the franchise, with financial penalties if they fail to meet agreed standards.

Bidders are required to work with partners, including Network Rail, to continue to enhance the station environment, and improve access for those with reduced mobility. A £12 million fund will be available from the third year of the franchise, to spend on improvements to facilities and services in consultation with passengers and local communities.

Bidders also have to set out how they will make better use of existing facilities by managing stations as long term assets, and identifying the potential for stations to be either developed commercially or made available for use by local communities.

Fares and ticketing

The consultation responses show that there are real opportunities for improving the passenger experience of fares and ticketing. Bidders are required to offer fares that are easy to understand, and ensure that information about fares and tickets is communicated clearly and transparently to customers so that they are able to choose the most appropriate fare for their journey.

Bidders will propose a strategy to improve the ticketing experience, including how they will develop and deploy smart ticketing technology, so that customers have widespread and easy access to the full range of tickets, with a range of ticket opportunities that meet their direct needs. Bidders are required to increase the proportion of annual season tickets that use smartcards, and introduce offers to benefit passengers who work or commute part-time.

Complying with equality obligations

We have ensured that the specification for the franchise was produced in accordance with the duty of equality under the Equality Act 2010. Further information on the Equality Act 2010 can be found on the Government website.

As part of their licensing obligations, train operators must establish and comply with a Disabled People's Protection Policy that sets out how they will protect the interests of disabled users of their trains and stations. Further information on this duty in relation to boarding trains and accessing stations can be found on the Office of Rail and Road website.





7
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