



Promoting Britain's  
Railway  
for Passengers  
and Freight

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### South East Route: Kent Area Study – Public Consultation

Railfuture is a national voluntary organisation structured in England as twelve regional branches, and two national branches in Wales and Scotland. Within the London and South East Branch there is a division responsible for the Kent Division. Nationally infrastructure issues are co-ordinated by the Infrastructure and Networks Group – Infrastructure Director Roger Blake/Deputy Head Chris Austin OBE FCILT email [roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk) / [christopher.austin@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:christopher.austin@railfuture.org.uk)

We are completely independent of all political parties, trades unions and commercial interests, funded entirely from our membership. We campaign for improved rail services for passengers and freight. Whilst pro-rail, we are not anti-car or aviation.

Input for the consultation response was gathered at a number of meetings, open to members and supporters at the national (Railfuture Policy Groups), regional (London and South East Branch) and local (Kent Division) levels. Responses were coordinated by the Southeastern TOC liaison and Kent Division Co-ordinator Chris Fribbins.

We welcome the opportunity to take part in this review and would be keen to engage further as necessary.

#### Overview

Railfuture is generally supportive of the interventions suggested and note the progress that has been made already on some items (e.g. 12 car platform extensions) and look forward to the next franchise having the rolling stock to make better use of it.)

There have been a number of major infrastructure enhancements in recent years (e.g. Thameslink, Crossrail and Highspeed) and still much that can be done. We hope the funding will follow these proposals.

**CO1 & CO7 London Bridge Metro** – Supported, although there will be a need for franchise operators to acquire Selective Door Opening trains to overcome the major constraints at Charing Cross and for a limited number of other stations.

**CO2 & CO8 Victoria Metro** – Supported, the interchange with London Overground should be exploited further.

**CO3 & CO9 High Speed** – Supported, passenger numbers have continued to increase after some initial scepticism by passengers.

**CO4 & CO10 Blackfriars** – Supported, it will be interesting to see how the use of additional Thameslink services develops.

**CO5 & CO11 London Bridge & Victoria Main Line** – Supported

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**CO1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11 Third Party Proposals**

*Bakerloo Line Extension* – support for extension to Lewisham, but more justification required for replacing heavy rail with Tube infrastructure further out from London

*TFL's Metroisation* – Supported. There are major passenger benefits.

*Crossrail towards Gravesend* – Supported, but it should include connectivity to Ebbsfleet (and Bluewater if practical as road traffic volumes are a major problem in the area). An alternative rail access solution, to the 'Paramount' development will also be needed to reduce road traffic. Further platform capacity at Gravesend may also be required, although that will be a major challenge.

**CO13, 15, 17, 18 – Various Conditional Outputs Marshlink High Speed** – Strongly supported and something that our organisation has been campaigning on. The economic advantages to East Sussex Coast are significant. Service extension to Eastbourne should be incorporated at the earliest stages of development.

**CO18 North to South Kent Connectivity** – Supported – this opens up further destinations from the Dartford/Gravesend/Ebbsfleet area.

**CO20 Freight** – Supported, although there are current concerns about infrastructure/freight train failures trains at the Angerstein Wharf, Lewisham/Nunhead junction and at Hoo Junction, that have caused significant disruption. Priority needs to be given towards eliminating these problems.

(GAP) Maintenance of the Hoo Junction to Grain branch needs to continue. This branch may be a solution to major housing development proposals on the Hoo Peninsula in the Medway Local Plan – there is only one road on and off the peninsula and existing traffic volumes are already high. A spur from the branch towards Strood would also be extremely useful for freight to avoid Gravesend/Dartford and Lewisham - without the need to reverse the train at Hoo Junction. This spur could also be used by a future Hoo Peninsula passenger service to access the spare capacity at Strood (to a shared platform 3) – electrification would not be required at this stage.

**CO21 Improved passenger circulation at stations** – Supported – IF the franchise suggestion of reducing London Terminal destinations is adopted, there will need to be further infrastructure work at stations to support it.

**CO28 – Resilience – Canterbury Chord.** Supported.

(GAP) *Resilience is a significant concern for the Kent Route.* Further work is required to ensure the infrastructure assets are documented and condition recorded and monitored so that preventive maintenance can be carried out. There have been a number of Landslips around the route, not just the major failure at Dover.

Railfuture would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the new franchise, at the earliest stages to help improve the service

Yours Faithfully



**Chris Fribbins**

Railfuture

Kent Division Co-ordinator