



Department
for Transport



South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation

Shaping the Future

March 2017



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1

Introduction

1. What is this document for?

This document sets out proposals to improve your train service on the South Eastern rail network. The contract for the current train service operator expires in December 2018, and we need to find the next operator to run the service.

Throughout this document the arrangement we have with the service operator is referred to as a franchise.

This is a consultation document and we would like to hear your views on the service now, as well as your thoughts on how to improve it in the years to come. Please read this consultation document all the way through and then, in the response form, give us your answers to our questions.

You can fill in the printed response form and post it to us, or you can respond online, or by email. Full details are at Section 9. We must receive your response by 23 May 2017.

We also encourage you to attend one of our consultation events, the details of which are on page 40 and 41.

In this document:

We explain why we are running a competition to find the next operator and the benefits this will bring

We set out our priorities for improving your service

We seek your views on these priorities and the options for improving your service

In the response form we have shown which section of the document covers the issues raised by each question. Please refer back to these sections as you answer the questions.

?

Throughout this document you will see a number of questions in boxes, looking like this. These questions relate to the response form that comes with this document.





2

Foreword

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LONDON



2. Foreword by the Transport Secretary

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

Secretary of State for Transport



Services on the South Eastern rail network have been unacceptably poor for far too long. Passengers have endured disruption, overcrowding and delays, particularly during redevelopment work at London Bridge station, and they deserve better. That is why this consultation is so important.

Appointing a new franchise operator from 2018 provides us with a great opportunity to sort out the problems which have plagued the South Eastern network, and deliver the high quality of service that customers expect. We are going to do things differently. I want passengers to enjoy more space and comfort, more and better communication with the operator, and a consistently reliable performance.

These will be our objectives with the new franchise, and with your help and advice, we will achieve them.

We are already delivering significantly more investment to renew the infrastructure but, to realise the sustained improvement in services that passengers rightly demand, we also need to modernise the way the railway is managed.

I recently set out my vision for bringing together the different organisations who maintain the tracks and run the trains, so they can work in a more joined-up way. I want Network Rail and franchise operators to form a closer partnership, and work as one team with a shared focus: to deliver a better railway for passengers. I want this 'one team' approach to begin with the South Eastern franchise.

As passengers know, South Eastern is a huge and complex operation, serving south east London as well as towns and villages across Kent and parts of East Sussex. Services run on new High Speed tracks as well as slower lines built in the Victorian era. They carry around a quarter of a million people a day on over 1,900 trains – the equivalent of transporting the combined population of Maidstone, Ashford and Hastings – and it is getting busier as new homes are built and jobs created.

So, appointing the right operator to run the franchise is vitally important. This is our chance for a fresh start with South Eastern – so I welcome your comments.

Reliable, high quality passenger services

First, our ambition for South Eastern is to create **more space for passengers**. In this consultation we explore the potential for running longer trains and upgrading or replacing the older trains used in and around London. This will come alongside the completion of two massive enhancement schemes – the Thameslink Programme and the Elizabeth Line – which will soon provide a huge increase in commuter seats in London, including the South East.

Second, action must be taken to **reduce delays**. I will require the train operator to form an alliance with Network Rail, the company that provides and maintains the railway. They will work together with the job of ensuring that trains run on time for passengers. And when unexpected and unavoidable delays do happen, **improved compensation arrangements** will offer a simpler repayment system, so that passengers feel they have been treated fairly when a journey is disrupted.

Third, the new operator should make better use of technology to serve passengers better. This will include things such as **smarter payment systems** – including mobile phones – moving away from the traditional paper ticket. By the start of the next franchise in 2018 over 125,000 South Eastern passengers will have the opportunity to transfer to a new, Government-funded smart ticket system, and this will grow.

Our plans include **improved customer service**. Passengers rightly expect to be treated as individuals and for staff to be able to respond quickly and effectively to their needs. In return, I want to see greater staff involvement in running the company for which they work, including strategic decision making at the highest levels and, potentially, sharing in the success of the service.

These transformative plans will require **innovative approaches by the rail industry**. The train operator will need to form new partnerships to deliver the service passengers expect – for example with organisations with a reputation for excellence in customer service. I will also seek to encourage **additional private sector investment** in infrastructure development, which could involve faster, more reliable journeys and new commercial, community and residential developments at stations.

Finally, I am open to considering **more radical approaches**. This will include considering whether the current length of franchises, as well as their size and the area they serve, provides the best outcomes for passengers.

I want to hear your views

In this document you will read more about our plans to improve the daily travel experience for passengers in south east London, Kent, the Medway towns, and East Sussex. Longer trains, stronger performance, and smarter services. I am always open to ideas for delivering better services to passengers. I encourage you to take this opportunity to respond to the consultation and I look forward to hearing from you.





3

Current service

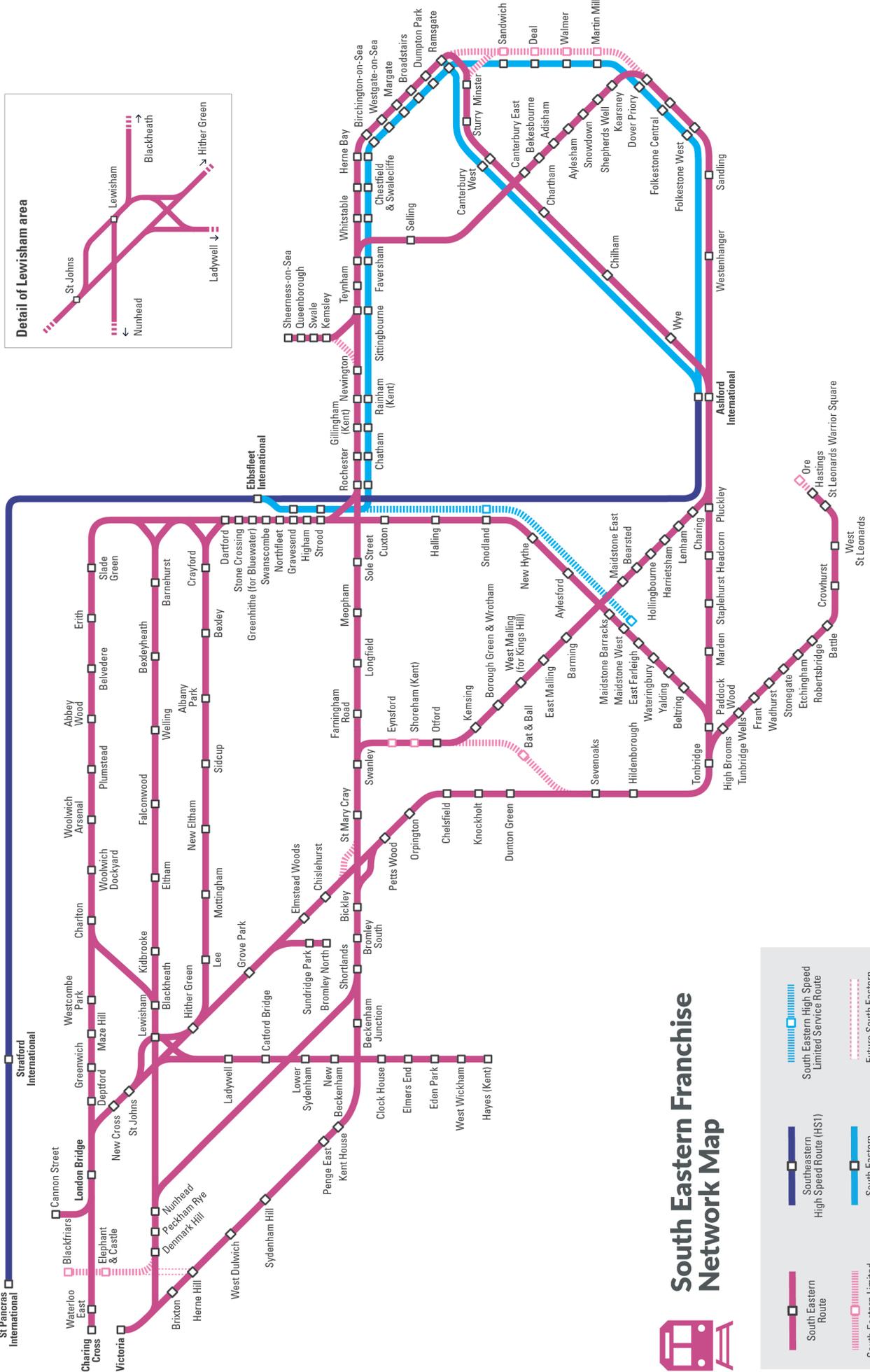
3. The current South Eastern service

- 3.1 The South Eastern franchise is one of the largest in the UK, operating over 1,900 services each weekday. It is principally a commuter railway, with around 65% of passengers travelling at peak times; however, there are also important business and leisure flows. It serves passengers in south east London and parts of Kent and East Sussex.
- 3.2 The majority of journeys on the franchise (around 90%) are either to or from London, using multiple routes serving central London and a choice of terminals. The franchise includes services to Charing Cross, Cannon Street, Blackfriars, Victoria and St. Pancras, with intermediary stops at London Bridge and Waterloo East. Local connectivity is provided by the Sheerness and Medway Valley branch lines; these are the only routes that do not start or end in London.
- 3.3 The South Eastern franchise can be viewed as three distinct segments:
 - **Metro routes:** the commuter services that operate within or just outside the Greater London area. These routes serve south east London, Hayes, Dartford and Sevenoaks.
 - **Mainline routes:** the longer distance services operating between London and parts of Kent and East Sussex.
 - **High Speed routes:** between St. Pancras and Ashford, and linking towns in Kent such as Folkestone, Dover, Ramsgate and Canterbury.

Train operating company		Passenger journeys (millions per year)		
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
①	Govia Thameslink Railway	300	312	327
②	South West Trains	223	230	238
③	London Overground	136	140	183
④	Southeastern	179	186	182
	of which, Metro	(113)	(117)	(115)

Figure 1: Passenger journeys by train operator (Office of Rail and Road)

- 3.4 A map of the South Eastern network is shown overleaf.
- 3.5 There were more than 180 million passenger journeys in the financial year 2015/16, making it the fourth largest franchise behind Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (operated by Govia Thameslink Railway, or “GTR”), South Western (operated by South West Trains) and London Overground. South Eastern Metro services alone carry around two thirds of the number of passengers as the London Overground, and are comparable in scale to a major London Underground line, such as the Circle line.



South Eastern Franchise Network Map



- Southeastern High-Speed Route (HS1)
- South Eastern Limited Service Routes
- Future South Eastern Limited Service Routes
- South Eastern High-Speed Routes (HS1)
- South Eastern Limited Service Routes

- 3.6 Three main types of train are currently used on the South Eastern network (see figure 2):
- The Javelin (left) is a modern, high speed train, introduced in 2009 for the launch of High Speed services between London and Kent.
 - The Networker (middle) was built in the early 1990s and is used on Mainline and Metro routes. It typically has seats in rows of three and two, separated by the aisle.
 - The Electrostar (right) is a more modern fleet, built in the early 2000s. It is predominantly used on Mainline routes; however, one version has fewer seats and larger doors to allow rapid boarding, and more standing areas. It is therefore better suited to busy Metro routes.
- 3.7 The High Speed service has been an extraordinary success. Opened in full in 2007, High Speed 1 is the first high-speed railway in the UK capable of operating at speeds of up to 140 miles per hour for domestic services. This has led to a dramatic improvement in the commuter service between London and Kent and, consequently, demand has soared. The service is now crowded during peak hours, and providing more space is a priority.



Figure 2: Southeastern rolling stock types.

1. London Bridge redevelopment

London Bridge is the fourth busiest station in the country, serving 54 million passengers each year. The redevelopment is transforming London Bridge, building a new concourse, more platforms and creating a bigger, better station for passengers.

These changes will allow more Thameslink trains to run through London Bridge, and some current South Eastern routes in Kent can expect new cross London links (see Box 3 on page 24 for detail). The redevelopment of London Bridge is now in its final phase – platforms 1-3 have closed until January 2018 while they are rebuilt. Cannon Street services cannot stop at London Bridge while this work is taking place.



Recent improvements to the service

- 3.8 The current franchise has been in place since April 2006. It is operated by London and South Eastern Railway (LSER) Limited, a joint venture between Go-Ahead and Keolis, under the brand name of Southeastern. The franchise was extended in 2014 to enable Southeastern to draw on its experience of running services during the significant rebuilding works at London Bridge (Box 1). The redevelopment works will be complete by January 2018, in time for the start of the new South Eastern franchise.
- 3.9 Since 2014, as part of the franchise extension, Southeastern has committed to, and delivered, a programme of improvements to the train service. The highlights are as follows:
- Operations:
 - More customer facing staff, including 100 new staff members, provided across the network.
 - A deep cleaning programme and general improvement works at stations.
 - A refresh of more than 300 trains.
 - Additional capacity with 95,000 additional seats introduced on services, including 1,050 additional seats on High Speed services.
 - Services and connections:
 - Improved connections between London, and north and east Kent through a new hourly high-speed service via Gillingham, Ramsgate, Dover and Ashford.
 - High Speed services calling at Snodland, Martin Mill and Walmer for the first time, along with extra High Speed services for Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate.
 - A peak-time Hastings Business Express service providing faster journeys into London, saving up to 10 minutes on previous journey times.
 - New direct services between Maidstone East and Blackfriars, and between Sheerness-on-Sea and London Victoria.
 - Extra evening and weekend services between Dartford and London Victoria.
 - Ticketing:
 - The extension of Oyster card acceptance to Dartford and Swanley, and the introduction of Oyster on the High Speed service between St. Pancras and Stratford International.
- 3.10 During the remainder of the franchise the Government will be delivering on three commitments to improve the customer service, along with a freeze in fares in real terms over the life of this Parliament:
- Extended **smart ticketing** was introduced in December 2016. Passengers can now swap their paper Season Ticket for the new smart card called 'The Key' - initially for weekly, monthly, and annual point-to-point, or Travelcard Season tickets. The next phase is to offer season tickets that benefit those who don't travel daily.
 - **On train Wi-Fi** will start to be installed across the whole Southeastern fleet from 2017. It is currently expected that the majority, and possibly the whole fleet, will be fitted by the end of 2018.
 - Currently passengers can claim **compensation** if their train is delayed by more than 30 minutes. This will be reduced to delays of more than 15 minutes with the new operator.



4

Challenges

4. Challenges facing the South Eastern service

- 4.1 There are a number of challenges facing the train service on the South Eastern network. Many of these are the same challenges that thriving cities all over the world face. Some of them apply specifically to the rail infrastructure and geography of London and the south east.

Train service

- 4.2 Services on the South Eastern network are complex, with many stations offering multiple routes into central London and a choice of London stations including Charing Cross, Cannon Street, Blackfriars and Victoria, with intermediate stops at London Bridge and Waterloo East. For example, services from Lewisham run to Cannon Street, Charing Cross and Victoria. While this increases direct journey opportunities for passengers, it also introduces operational complexity, requiring trains to cross complex and busy junctions. This is a major contributor to delays, and makes it much harder to recover the service when things go wrong.
- 4.3 The high proportion of passengers travelling at peak times leads to overcrowding, which is an understandable cause of frustration for passengers. The time taken for large numbers of passengers to board and alight from busy trains can also lead to trains being delayed, with knock on consequences for other services. Elsewhere, and including on the London Overground network, the introduction of high capacity carriages with wider doors and quicker access, carrying more passengers, has been very popular and has helped reduce overcrowding.

Infrastructure

- 4.4 The South Eastern network includes one of the most modern, reliable and popular services anywhere – High Speed services running between London and Kent. It also includes some of the oldest lines in the country, which were built by the Victorians as far back as the 1830s without considering that they would still be operating nearly two centuries later. The collapse of the Dover sea wall in 2015 provided a dramatic example of the ageing infrastructure (Box 2).
- 4.5 With this in mind, it is of note that the reliability of the network is as high as it has ever been. The programme of infrastructure enhancements and maintenance by Network Rail has meant that there is more capacity, with fewer failures of track, junctions and signals, than ever before.

2. The collapse of the Dover sea wall

On Christmas Eve 2015, the sea wall and 250 metres of track between Dover Priory and Folkestone Central collapsed. The railway at this location was originally built by the Victorians on a timber viaduct. The extent of the damage meant that it was necessary for Network Rail to build a new 235 metre-long viaduct, supported by more than 130 concrete columns. Following major repair work, the railway line between Dover and Folkestone was re-opened in September 2016, three months ahead of schedule.

- 4.6 The design of the railway also presents challenges to running a reliable, efficient service, for example:
- Most lines have two tracks, one in each direction. This means that if a train is delayed, or breaks down, all following services are impacted.
 - Complex junctions at key points such as London Bridge and Lewisham require trains to cross over other tracks to reach their destination. This can lead to queuing and delays.
- 4.7 The final destination for most passengers is one of the London terminals and there is a constraint on the number of trains it is possible to operate per hour, given that passengers must safely disembark before the train fills with passengers for the next service. There are also constraints on the length of trains at some locations; for example, some platforms at Victoria can only accommodate 8 carriage trains, rather than the longer 10 or 12 carriage trains required for many commuter services.
- 4.8 When trains are not being used, they are moved to sidings for storage, or depots for cleaning, inspection and maintenance. Locations for this include Gillingham, Ashford, Faversham, Slade Green and Victoria. Depots are operating at, or near capacity, which means that new ones may need to be built to enable more, or longer, trains to be introduced on the network.

What effect does this have?

- 4.9 Around 500,000 journeys are made on the South Eastern network each day. But trains on commuter routes are very busy at peak times, and are getting busier. Even small delays can have knock-on consequences for other services and, because the timetable is optimised to provide as much capacity as possible into London, once things start to go wrong, it is often difficult to recover. Providing services to multiple London stations, on complex infrastructure increases the challenge of operating a simple, efficient and reliable timetable. The redevelopment works at London Bridge have contributed to the challenge, although they will enable improvements in performance when they are complete. The result of this is that the proportion of trains arriving on time has fallen in recent years (see figure 3). This has had an impact on passenger satisfaction which is below the average for other networks in London and the south east of England¹.
- 4.10 Many stations, not just those in London, have capacity issues at the busiest times, with small concourses and pinch points impeding the flow of passengers. They were not designed to cope with the numbers of passengers we see today.

1. The Autumn 2016 National Passenger Survey reported that 77% of Southeastern passengers scored their overall satisfaction as 'satisfied' or 'good', which is below the average of 80% for London and South East train operating companies.

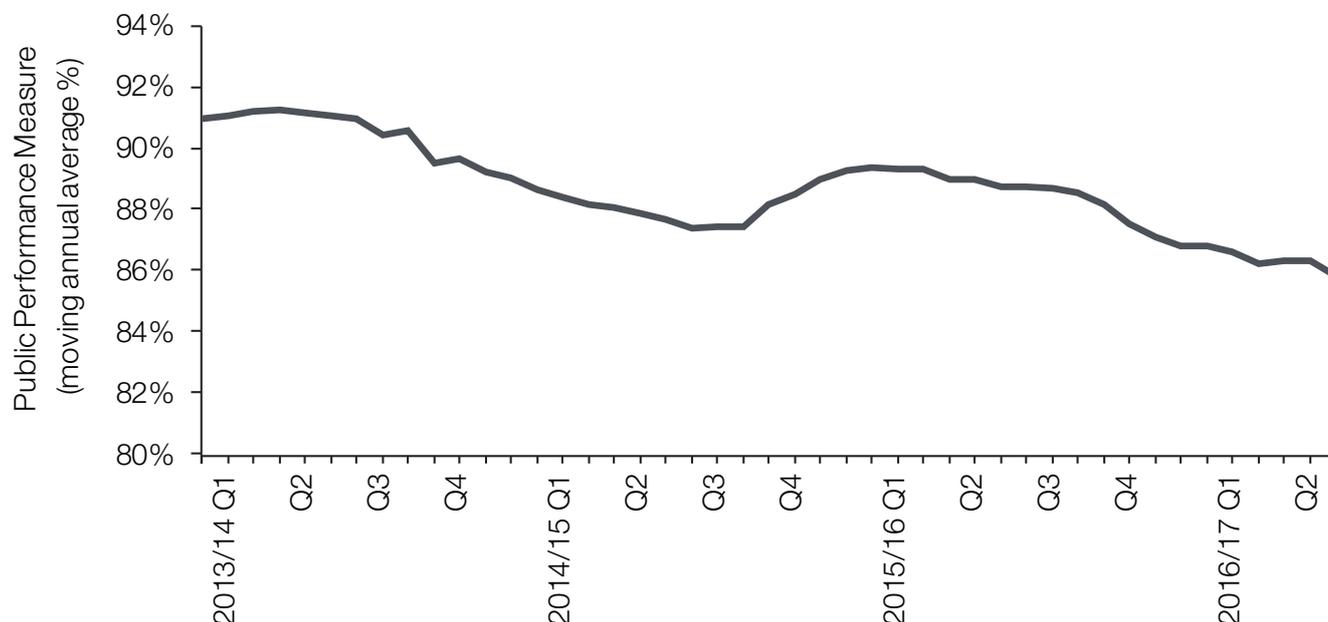


Figure 3 Public Performance Measure: South Eastern Moving Annual Average
(Trains arriving within five minutes of the scheduled time at their final destination).

The longer term

4.11 The South Eastern network is central to the economic success of the places it serves.

The population of London is set to rise from 8.6 million to 10 million people by 2030, while the population in the adjacent travel to work areas of south east and eastern England is expected to increase from 15 million to 17 million people over the same period. This will mean that more passengers will wish to use rail services in the future, when peak hour commuter services are already crowded.

4.12 As well as a general increase in demand for rail services, large residential developments are being built, or planned, in the South Eastern franchise area which are likely to create increased demand for rail services. These are:

- The City in the East, which aims to promote the development of the east of London from London Bridge, through the Isle of Dogs and Greenwich Peninsula, to Bexley and Thamesmead. The identified areas have potential to provide at least 200,000 new homes, of which around 68,400 are in the South Eastern franchise area.

- Ebbsfleet Garden City, which could provide up to 15,000 homes. In 2015, the Government announced a £300 million fund to accelerate the development.
- The Thames Gateway project, which aims to boost the economy of the whole Thames estuary region, includes plans for up to 160,000 homes. The main concentrations of population are in Medway and in the towns of Dartford, Gravesend, and Sittingbourne.
- The Hastings and Bexhill area.
- Otterpool Park in Shepway.

4.13 The general increase in the population in London and the south east, along with the specific new developments mentioned above, will support growth and enhance the economy. The challenge will be for the next South Eastern train operator, working with Network Rail, to provide services that meet the increased demand.



5
Improvement

5. Options for improvement

Introduction

- 5.1 Every day, many thousands of people use the South Eastern network to travel to their place of work or study, or for leisure. Everyone wants to travel on a clean, modern train, and to arrive on time. The franchise for the current train service operator expires in December 2018, and we need to find the next operator to run the service. We are currently planning that this will last until around 2025-2028, in line with the current model of franchises of 7-10 years, which incentivises the operator to improve the service and invest in new trains. Our objectives will address the needs of passengers across every part of the South Eastern network, from London to the coast of Kent and East Sussex.
- 5.2 We have undertaken a number of activities to prepare for the new franchise. They include:
- A review of the existing franchise and an assessment of the opportunities and challenges presented in the next one.
 - Work with Transport Focus and London TravelWatch, the independent transport watchdogs, to understand what improvements passengers want to see.
 - Close collaboration with Network Rail to understand the impacts of its current investment programme, and the options for infrastructure upgrades during the next franchise.
 - Meetings with local authorities, Transport for London and passenger groups to ensure their priorities are reflected in our plans.
- 5.3 Our research shows that customer satisfaction has been falling in recent years, mainly because of overcrowding at peak times, and delays and cancellations to trains. Customer service is also an issue, including the provision of information to passengers during disruption. The following issues are also considered important:
- Some passengers would like an increased staff presence late at night to make them feel more secure on the railway.
 - Oyster-style contactless payment ‘smart cards’ and part-time season tickets are widely desired.
 - Increasingly, passengers within Greater London and beyond view their journey as part of the ‘wider London transport system’; interchange with the London Underground and Overground, the Docklands Light Railway, buses, taxis, walking and cycling is viewed as an area for improvement.
- 5.4 Based on what we have heard so far, our priorities are:
- Making trains run on time.
 - Providing more space for passengers – to cater for an increasing demand for rail travel, with more and more people wanting to use trains within Greater London and on High Speed routes in particular.
 - Improving passenger satisfaction on Mainline and Metro services.
 - 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.

1

Do our priorities correctly reflect your views?

Challenges

Addressing known challenges on the franchise is critical; our research has clearly shown where the challenges lie. We want bidders to be innovative and creative in tackling them. And we want your opinions too.

Challenges	Issues to address:	Questions for you
<p>To introduce longer trains</p>	<p>Journeys made on Metro and High Speed services are likely to rise.</p> <p>Options may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending Metro trains to 12 carriages, rather than 10 or 8. • Providing more seats on High Speed services. <p>Before introducing longer trains, thought needs to be given towards the constraints of the infrastructure, including the need for longer platforms, and at stations which can reach capacity at the busiest times of the day.</p> <p>We will encourage bidders to provide solutions, so the network is able to carry more passengers at the busiest time, with no compromise on punctuality.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Do you agree that more space is needed for passengers at the busiest times of the day?</p>
<p>To reconfigure/rearrange/redesign/adapt trains</p>	<p>Through the use of modern high capacity trains on certain London Underground lines and on London Overground, we know that redesigning the layout of trains is a solution to achieving optimal capacity.</p> <p>Current options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New high capacity Metro style carriages on the busiest routes. <p>Through this redesign, we want to be able to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better balance of seating and room for standing passengers. • Space for wheelchairs and pushchairs on shorter journeys. • Speedier boarding and alighting at stations. <p>A further consideration is the existing provision of First Class seating. We recognise that First Class tickets remain popular on certain routes, notably on the South Eastern main line to Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. However, removing it would create more room for passengers, which would be important during peak hours.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>What comments, if any, do you have on options for providing more space through:</p> <p>a) Longer trains; and</p> <p>b) Metro style carriages with larger entrances and more standing room and handholds?</p> <p>4</p> <p>Would you support removing First Class seating on the busiest routes to provide more space?</p>

Challenges	Issues to address:	Questions for you
<p>To improve customer service</p>	<p>Improving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journey planning. • 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. 	<p>5</p> <p>What comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve customer service and the overall passenger experience?</p> <p>6</p> <p>Do you have any other ideas or priorities for improving customer service?</p>
<p>Simplifying fares and ticketing</p>	<p>Ticket buying habits are changing with more people purchasing from ticket machines and increasingly on smart media rather than purchasing at the station ticket office.</p> <p>We want to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide passengers with widespread and easy access to the full range of tickets. • Ensure that they have all the information they need to select and purchase the most appropriate ticket for their journey. <p>The future operator will be expected to work with partners to introduce more modern ways for people to pay for their journey, such as pay as you go or barcode solutions. This includes: making greater use of new technology; improving station ticket retailing; and considering the role staff play in providing the best possible passenger experience.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?</p> <p>8</p> <p>What else could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?</p>

Challenges

To improve access and facilities at stations

Issues to address:

We want to make stations accessible for passengers, particularly those with additional needs. For example:

- Identifying solutions to improve access or interchange for people with accessibility needs – we know this is a problem at some stations.
- Improving passenger assistance systems.

We also believe it is important for facilities to be upgraded to improve the experience of passengers. This will include:

- 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.

Questions for you

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?



Challenges

To speed up longer distance journeys

Issues to address:

We want to speed up longer-distance journeys which have a very long journey time relative to the length of the route, for instance between London and Hastings.

One option is to operate High Speed services between St. Pancras and Hastings, Bexhill and Rye via Ashford International.

We are also exploring various options for reducing the journey time on the existing Mainline route between Hastings and Charing Cross via Tonbridge. For instance, reducing calls at less well used stations could deliver an hourly fast service. Other services would still stop at these stations. This approach could also be adopted on other routes, such as Tonbridge to Ashford.

Although we would be delivering faster journeys, we recognise that this has the potential to inconvenience passengers that currently use those intermediate stations.

Questions for you

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?

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?

13

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

Challenges

Issues to address:

Questions for you

To offer journeys that meet your needs

We know that South Eastern passengers within London typically only use the network for one leg of their journey. There is also the potential for new train services to replace journeys which are currently made by road. We will encourage bidders to think broadly about how the South Eastern network connects with other transport links to enable quicker, and more convenient journeys. This could include

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

14

Which journeys do you make today which are difficult?
 a) By rail?
 b) By road, which would be easier by rail?

15

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

To implement an effective timetable

Metro service patterns can be both irregular and complicated. An effective timetable has the potential to deliver:

- More reliable and punctual services.
- More regular intervals between services, throughout the day.
- More passengers carried overall.
- No knock-on impact on services in Kent, the Medway Towns and East Sussex.

For example, we could ask bidders for a minimum service level of four trains per hour Monday to Friday on a given route, to be provided at regular ‘clockface’ intervals (e.g. every 15 minutes) throughout the day.

16

How far do you support, or oppose, options to simplify the timetable?

Challenges

To initiate a regular service to a single London Terminal

Issues to address:

There would be a limit to the improvements that could be made to the timetable without also reducing the number of central London stations served from certain locations at particular times. An example might be for all Metro services on the north Kent (between Dartford and Charlton), Greenwich and Bexleyheath lines to terminate at Cannon Street only.

We believe that the simplicity of a regular service to a single London terminal throughout the day would benefit both regular and occasional passengers. A simpler service can help deliver a step-change improvement in the punctuality of both Metro and Mainline services.

We are aware that losing direct connections to particular central London stations has the potential to inconvenience a number of passengers, by requiring them to change their usual journey patterns.

Questions for you

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?

Integrating South Eastern with new train services

Our ambition is for a South Eastern train service that fully complements the new Thameslink and Elizabeth Line services planned to be introduced in 2018. These two major infrastructure programmes will provide new trains, additional journey opportunities and allow more passengers to travel between central London, south east Boroughs and beyond.

3. Thameslink programme

The Thameslink programme is transforming north-south travel through London to help meet a huge rise in demand from passengers. By 2018, passengers will benefit from:

- Improved connections. More stations outside London will be connected to the Thameslink route, giving faster and more direct travel options to more destinations. There will be a brand new rail hub at Farringdon connecting Thameslink and the Elizabeth Line and providing direct links to three major airports (Gatwick, Heathrow and Luton) and St. Pancras International.
- More reliable journeys. Trains will run every 2-3 minutes in each direction through central London at the busiest times. New track and modern trains will provide more reliable journeys.
- Better stations. Work is complete at Blackfriars and Farringdon. When redevelopment work is complete at London Bridge in 2018, it will provide passengers with more space and easier connections to other rail services and the London Underground.
- The current plan, from 2018, is for Thameslink to operate services into Kent all day at a frequency of two trains per hour on each of the following routes;
 - To Sevenoaks, as now.
 - To Orpington and Kentish Town, extending to Luton at the busiest times.
 - To Maidstone East and Cambridge, via London Bridge.
 - To Rainham and Luton, via Greenwich and London Bridge.

In addition, occasional services to Kent House via Herne Hill and Penge East will be remapped from Thameslink to the South Eastern operator.

These changes will require some South Eastern services to be rearranged.

We recognise that, as far as possible, passengers will want to retain the overall frequency of service and connectivity they currently enjoy, whichever operator runs the trains they use. We will need to understand from Network Rail how best to fit the Thameslink and South Eastern services together in 2018, before we can ask bidders to set out their plans to build upon the new timetable in the next franchise. In line with normal industry processes, and as part of their franchise obligations, Southeastern are required to consult on any timetable changes they plan to make for 2018.

4. Elizabeth Line

The Elizabeth Line (previously known as Crossrail) is a new railway for London and the South East opening in 2018. It runs from Reading and Heathrow in the west through 42km of new tunnels under London to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east. The project is building 10 new stations and upgrading 30 more, while integrating new and existing infrastructure. The new service will speed up journey times, increase central London's capacity by 10% and bring an extra 1.5 million people to within 45 minutes of central London. A train will run every two and a half minutes at peak times through central London. From December 2018 South Eastern passengers will be able to join Elizabeth Line services at Abbey Wood and Woolwich and travel quickly to Canary Wharf, central London, Reading and Heathrow and, from May 2019 also join High Speed services at Stratford.

The next franchise operator will face challenges and opportunities in catering for the new travel patterns that are expected to develop as passengers take advantage of these new connections. For example, more passengers will wish to interchange at Abbey Wood.

Our aims for the franchise

As well as addressing the known challenges, we want the operator to drive continuous improvement in all areas over the life of the franchise so that the results are tangible for all users. With this in mind, we would like to see bidders' ideas for bringing our aims to fruition.

Greater partnership working between the Train Operator and Network Rail

We want to see much greater alignment of the operator and Network Rail throughout the South Eastern network, to deliver a modern, innovative, reliable and passenger-focused railway. We also want to see much less disruption from repairs, an improvement in preventative maintenance and a more prompt reaction to incidents on the track. Our overriding aim is to improve the level of operational performance on the railway at the same time as lowering the railway's overall running costs. We want shared incentives that will focus the partnership on the single most important objective: giving passengers the reliable and punctual services they quite correctly expect.

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?

19

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

Achieve more local focus in the franchise

There is considerable opportunity for us to have much more of a local focus in the South Eastern franchise and we would like to see bidders' ideas for achieving this. To help move this forward, we are collaborating with Kent, Medway and East Sussex Councils and other local authorities. As with previous franchises, we will work with Transport for London. This is required so we understand how to address the needs of passengers who travel on both the inner London-based services and longer distance commutes. Further areas of work might extend to common standards, ticketing, strategic planning and working together to deliver projects.

20

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

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

Greater engagement between users and the new franchise operator

We want the next operator to engage fully with passengers and place them at the heart of their business and operations. It should also explore how the service provided can continue to improve. We will also ask whether underutilised space at stations on the franchise can be transferred to the local community. We will ask bidders to give us their suggestion on this.

Investing in people working on the franchise

- We want to ensure that people working on the franchise have the information, training and tools they need to communicate effectively with passengers, and to create an environment people are proud and enthusiastic to work in.
- We are confident that we have a strong basis for taking the existing workforce forward to the next franchise. The customer-facing workforce has recently been expanded by 100 new staff. We would like to see more development, support and empowerment of the frontline staff so that customer assistance and security is enhanced, including during those difficult periods when there is disruption. We want to be in a position where the level of customer service on the franchise compares favourably with the very best in transport and other sectors. We will be asking bidders to share their ideas for investing in the workforce.
- Our research has shown that passengers like staff to be available to help them on trains and at stations. We know that this is particularly important for infrequent, vulnerable or disabled travellers who benefit from staff being visible on trains to provide reassurance and assistance; this is even more important when services are disrupted. It can also act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour, which is often more of an issue on late night services. We will encourage bidders to suggest ways to increase the availability of staff and to balance this by becoming more efficient where passengers require less help.

Improving the rail industry's contribution to South East economy

The South Eastern network plays a vital role in the economic success of south east London, Kent and East Sussex. The next franchise provides an opportunity to improve transport links to key employment, leisure and business destinations, including coastal areas, and bidders will be expected to tell us how they propose to do this.

There are a number of proposed housing and commercial developments planned across the franchise area, notably along the Thames Gateway and in places such as Ebbsfleet. While planning for the next franchise, we will form a balanced view of future demand for rail travel, informed both by historical trends and by specific plans for local development.

As bidders develop their proposals, we would like them to consider:

- Improving access to key employment, leisure and business destinations, including coastal areas.
- Keeping the railway open longer each day.
- Providing new journey opportunities where there is sufficient demand for travel.
- Better market off-peak and weekend travel to leisure and tourist destinations.

Social responsibility

Delivering safe, secure and sustainable transport is a core priority for the Department for Transport. We are working together with the independent Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to ensure the rail industry's sustainable development principles are embedded within our rail franchises.

Stations are at the heart of local interaction with the railway, and are central to how a train operator engages with customers and communities. To make this a reality, we expect bidders to provide a Social and Commercial Development Plan for stations. They should consider how they will:

- Identify buildings and facilities for use by the community.
- Support access to rail for vulnerable groups.
- Consult with local people on the issues facing them.
- Improve integration with other types of transport to provide an easier and more environmentally sustainable end-to-end journey.



6

Bringing it
all together

6. Our vision for the future

6.1 Britain's railways have boomed since privatisation in the mid-1990s. There are more trains, carrying more passengers, more reliably. But, as a result, much of the railway, particularly in London and the South East, is operating on the edge of what it can cope with. If and when things go wrong, the impact can be rapid and widespread.

Working together

6.2 So, the railway needs to adapt and change to be able to cope with the growth already experienced, and that which lies ahead. We need a truly sustainable railway, and that means a series of changes to deliver the best possible experience for passengers in the future. It means:

- Continuing to deliver a steady programme of improvements and enhancements.
- Looking at ways of expanding the railway further, in an innovative way.
- Harnessing new technology to transform the ways our railways work.
- Changing the way the industry works to make sure it meets the needs of passengers.

6.3 Anything which gets in the way of this should be fixed. It is clear, that while Network Rail and the current operator have worked hard to join up their operations, not all their priorities are the same. We need to bring together the operation of track and train on the railway. It will mean that it is much easier to focus on providing the best service to passengers, and meet the challenges of today's network. Whether it's planning essential repairs, putting in place improvements that can squeeze in an extra service on a crowded route, or responding to a problem on the network, the railway is much better run by one joined up team of people.

6.4 This new franchise is the right moment to bring things closer together. We are exploring how the train operator can form an integrated operating team with Network Rail, incentivised to deliver the best possible service for passengers. Section 5 explains that the organisations will form an alliance to achieve this outcome during the next franchise.

6.5 We could also require the alliance to continuously improve the whole passenger experience. This could include regular reviews of the timetable to ensure that it meets passengers' changing needs, and a commitment to optimise the timetable to provide a reliable service with trains that are as frequent and fast as possible.

6.6 While significant investment has been made to customer service in recent years (see Section 3), more needs to be done to match levels of service seen in other successful high volume transport businesses, such as the airline industry. We are considering requiring the train operator to draw on the expertise of organisations which excel in customer service to help them improve the service they provide. This will mean putting the passenger at the heart of everything the train operator does.

21

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

New routes to investment

- 6.7 Not everything can change in the new franchise. Transforming a partly-Victorian, fast growing railway will take time – and work cannot come at the price of disrupting the day-to-day service. But nor is that an excuse for holding back essential investment.
- 6.8 Some investment will come through established mechanisms, of the kind which will soon see the completion of the massive London Bridge rebuilding project. This will make South Eastern and Thameslink services more frequent, reliable and faster.
- 6.9 Now is the time to look to new ways of bringing in improvements. This should include new models of private funding, of the kind common in other forms of infrastructure.
- 6.10 The Department is looking to rail operators and other parts of the private sector to propose models which could bring in better services for passengers. This could include longer, concession-style franchises and specific investment in key projects.
- 6.11 The recently announced East West rail line, running from Oxford to Cambridge, has demonstrated the Government's commitment to seek private sector funding to design, build and operate routes which have traditionally been the responsibility of Network Rail. We will build on this and encourage innovative proposals for private sector funding, including from the train operator and wider industry. This could range from upgrading and sharing in the success of part of the South Eastern network, including infrastructure, through to providing new shops in stations. Proposals will be judged on whether they deliver improvements to passengers and value for money for the taxpayer.

22

Where do you think private sector investment would be of most benefit to the railway?

New routes

- 6.12 Much of the South Eastern network runs to a pattern set many decades ago. Although the introduction of High Speed services in 2009 led to a recast of the timetable, and another will follow new Thameslink services, other services follow old patterns of demand. People want to travel on routes which are currently badly served by rail, with services either too slow or non-existent. This franchise offers a chance to reshape the rail system of London, Kent and East Sussex to serve these fast-growing counties better.
- 6.13 We will consider options for new routes and connections, enabled by the Thameslink programme and the Elizabeth Line, and we will explore others where these deliver passenger benefits and value for money for the taxpayer.
- 6.14 For instance the Ashford to Tonbridge line, which connects on to Redhill and Reading under other operators, could form part of a fast and frequent London orbital service, taking pressure away from the M20 and M25. As it is journeys are faster via London and this potential link is underused.
- 6.15 The extension of High Speed services to Hastings, Bexhill and Rye has been proposed to speed up links between Hastings and London and support the development of the town. The two centres are only around 65 miles apart but direct trains take up to two hours, and speeding up journeys on the existing infrastructure is challenging.
- 6.16 There is an option to split the current Brighton to Ashford service, operated by Southern at Hastings, to operate longer electric trains between Brighton and Hastings, a route which suffers from overcrowding. If the Hastings and Ashford leg was incorporated into the next franchise, the operator could focus on service enhancements including more frequent services, to deliver better connections to London-bound high speed services from Ashford International.

New technology and innovation

- 6.17 The next South Eastern franchise is currently expected to run until at least 2025. By then, technology and work patterns will be different to those of today. More people, for instance, may want to travel outside traditional commuting hours, work partly from home, or travel to new centres of employment. We are therefore considering more radical, new approaches to transforming the service provided on the South Eastern network.
- 6.18 The train operator must adapt to make the most of technology, including delivering ambitious plans for smart ticketing. Technology has been used in many industries to drive rapid change, and we expect the train operator to use it to improve services.
- 6.19 We also expect bidders to explain how they will modernise and simplify the journey experience through the use of technology and best practice from other industries.
- 6.20 As the Chief Executive of Network Rail indicated recently, improvements such as new digital signalling systems could allow much more efficient use of rolling stock and could be funded jointly with outside organisations. Better capacity on the railway should not come only from new trains. By running existing ones faster and more often passengers may get a better service at lower cost, holding down fares.
- 6.21 A Digital Railway Traffic Management System is planned to be introduced onto the Thameslink area on the South Eastern network. This will benefit passengers by providing live train running information and it will help the operator restore services more quickly after incidents. In future, it is likely that all South Eastern trains will be compatible with this technology.

6.22 Looking to the future, we will also consider whether the current size of franchises, and the area they serve, provides the best outcome for passengers. For example, smaller franchises could allow new, more innovative, entrants to the market. It could also be possible to create local innovation zones – hubs of high technology industry – with the rail service tailored to match its needs, for example by the innovation of specific services or even a light railway. The Thames Gateway would be an example of a region where this approach could be introduced.

23

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

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?



7

Questions

7. Questions

1. Do our priorities correctly reflect your views?
2. Do you agree that more space is needed for passengers at the busiest times of the day?
3. What comments, if any, do you have on options for providing more space through:
 - a) Longer trains; and
 - b) Metro style carriages with larger entrances and more standing room and handholds?
4. Would you support removing First Class seating on the busiest routes to provide more space?
5. What comments, if any, do you have on our plans to improve customer service and the overall passenger experience?
6. Do you have any other ideas or priorities for improving customer service?
7. What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?
8. What else could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?
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?
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?
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?
13. If you support this proposal, which services do you think would most benefit from this approach?
14. Which journeys do you make today which are difficult?
 - a) By rail?
 - b) By road, which would be easier by rail?
15. Which additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?
16. How far do you support, or oppose, options to simplify the timetable?
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?
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?
19. What are your views on how this alliance should be incentivised and held to account for its performance?
20. How would you prefer the next South Eastern operator to engage with you:
 - a) As an individual?
 - b) As an organisation (if appropriate)?
21. What approaches to customer service in other companies could be adopted by the next South Eastern train operator?
22. Where do you think private sector investment would be of most benefit to the railway?
23. Should we consider using the more lightly used sections of the railway in a different way? If so, how should this be done?
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?



8

What will happen next

8. The procurement process

The franchising schedule

- 8.1 The South Eastern rail franchise competition is part of a wider Rail Franchising Programme². Our vision is of a world-class railway that creates opportunity for people and businesses. To realise this vision, we invite train operating companies to set out how they will work with us to improve passenger rail services, including by providing more space for passengers. If you would like to learn more about the railway industry and the role the Government plays in running the railways, further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rail-franchising>.
- 8.2 We have now invited train operating companies to express their interest in bidding to operate the next South Eastern rail franchise, which begins in December 2018. We are publishing a prospectus for the franchise competition to promote market interest in the competition and help attract as many bids as possible. This can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rail-franchising#south-eastern-franchise>.
- 8.3 We believe we now have a great opportunity to transform the passenger experience, with a particular focus on improving performance and providing a better timetable and longer trains fit for the twenty-first century.

2. Details of our rail franchising programme are online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rail-franchising>



Figure 4: South Eastern franchise competition timetable

The competition timeline

- 8.4 The planned timeline for the competition is set out in figure 4.
- 8.5 Once the consultation has closed, responses will be considered and then:
 - Used to inform what we ask for from shortlisted bidders in the Invitation to Tender (ITT).
 - Provided as information to bidders to help inform and improve their bid.

- 8.6 Following the publication of the ITT, bidders will then submit their proposals. We consider both price and quality (which includes deliverability) as part of the evaluation of the proposals³; we also ensure that bids are financially robust and offer value for money to the taxpayer.
- 8.7 We encourage bids that are ambitious in their attempts to improve the punctuality, quality and reliability of services. At the same time, we aim to discourage bids that are overly optimistic, either in their assessment of costs and revenues or in the deliverability of improvements.
- 8.8 Once a winning bid has been identified, the contract is awarded. The new train operating company then has a period of months to get everything in place, ready to start operating the new franchise for passengers on day one of the new franchise.

Network Rail

- 8.9 In parallel with this consultation, Network Rail is also asking for views on its Kent Route Study, which sets out options for upgrading the railway in the medium and long term. The route study includes options for lengthening the trains on the South Eastern network. We are already considering these options as part of this consultation, and so Network Rail is not inviting comments on them as well. You are invited to respond to us on proposals to increase the space provided for passengers (question 3).

3. In the ITT, we call this the 'most economically advantageous tender'.



9

Important
information

9. Important information on the consultation

How to respond

The consultation period began on 14 March 2017 and will run until 23 May 2017. You can respond in writing, online or by e-mail. Please ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date as we will not be able to consider responses received later. If you would like further copies of this consultation document, it can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/dft#consultations> or you can contact us using the below methods if you would like alternative formats (Braille, audio CD, etc).

In writing:

South Eastern Rail Franchise
 Consultation Co-ordinator
 Zone 4/13
 Department for Transport
 Great Minister House
 33 Horseferry Road
 London
 SW1P 4DR

Online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rail-franchising#south-eastern-franchise>

By E-mail:

BetterSouthEastern@dft.gsi.gov.uk

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

If you are responding as an individual, any personal details you are able to provide will help strengthen the evidence base as we develop our proposals and respond to your suggestions, including:

- Your first name and surname.
- The first half of your postcode.
- Your nearest station (this is not necessarily the one you use the most).
- Where you normally travel from and to on the train.
- The times when you most regularly travel on the train.
- How often you travel on the train.
- The reason why you make your most regular rail journey - such as when you are travelling to work, for leisure, or when you are on business.
- If you have any particular accessibility needs; these might include needing wheelchair access, pushchair access, English not being your first language, or if you are blind or partially sighted, or have capability impairments.

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the DfT.

We will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. Individual consultation responses may be shared with bidders in an anonymised format as part of the franchise competition and/or in preparing a response to this consultation.

By providing personal data in response to this consultation, you consent to the DfT, or third parties contracted to the DfT, processing your personal data for the purpose of analysing responses to this consultation.

As part of our analysis of responses to this consultation, we would like to be able to take into account certain sensitive personal data that you may wish to provide in response to this consultation. In providing your responses to the DfT by email or post please indicate whether you consent to the DfT, or third parties contracted to the DfT, processing your sensitive personal data for the purposes of analysing responses to this consultation.

Consultation Events

There will be a series of consultation events: three formal events aimed at local authorities, industry bodies, passenger representative groups and other stakeholders; and a number of 'drop in' sessions where members of the public can find out more about our proposals (details on next page).

If you would be interested in attending a formal stakeholder event, please contact the Consultation Co-ordinator (details on the previous page). You do not need to inform us if you would like to attend one of the other sessions – we encourage you to simply turn up and have your say.

If you have any suggestions of others who may wish to be involved in this process please contact us.

What will happen next?

A summary of responses will be included in the Stakeholder Briefing Document to be published alongside the Invitation to Tender planned for September. Paper copies will be available on request.

If you have questions about this consultation please contact:

South Eastern Rail Franchise
Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 4/13
Department for Transport
Great Minister House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Consultation principles

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles which are listed below. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

Consultation Co-ordinator
Department for Transport
Zone 1/29 Great Minister House
London SW1P 4DR
Email consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Table of dates

Public events

Thu 23rd March 16:00-19:00	London Victoria	Eastern concourse
Tues 28th March 16:00-19:00	London Cannon St.	Station concourse
Sat 1st April 10:00-13:00	Lewisham	Glass Mill Leisure Centre
Sat 8th April 11:00-14:00	Hastings	Muriel Matters House
Mon 10th April 16:00-19:00	Sevenoaks	Station concourse
Tues 11th April 16:30-19:00	Maidstone	County Hall
Mon 24th April 16:00-19:00	London Charing Cross	Station concourse
Tues 25th April 16:00-19:00	London St Pancras	Station concourse
Mon 8th May 16:00-19:00	London Bridge	Station concourse
Tues 9th May 16:00-19:00	Gravesend	Civic Centre
Wed 10th May 16:00-19:00	Canterbury	Westgate Hall

Stakeholder events

Tues 11th April 13:00-16:00	Maidstone	County Hall
Thurs 20th April 13:00-16:00	Chatham	Gun Wharf
Thurs 27th April 13:00-16:00	Greenwich	Town Hall, Woolwich

