
Thanet Parkway Station

To: **Cabinet - 20th January 2015**

Main Portfolio Area: **Economic Development/Planning**

By: **Councillor Nicholson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All**

Summary: To update Members on the progress of the Parkway Station Project.

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

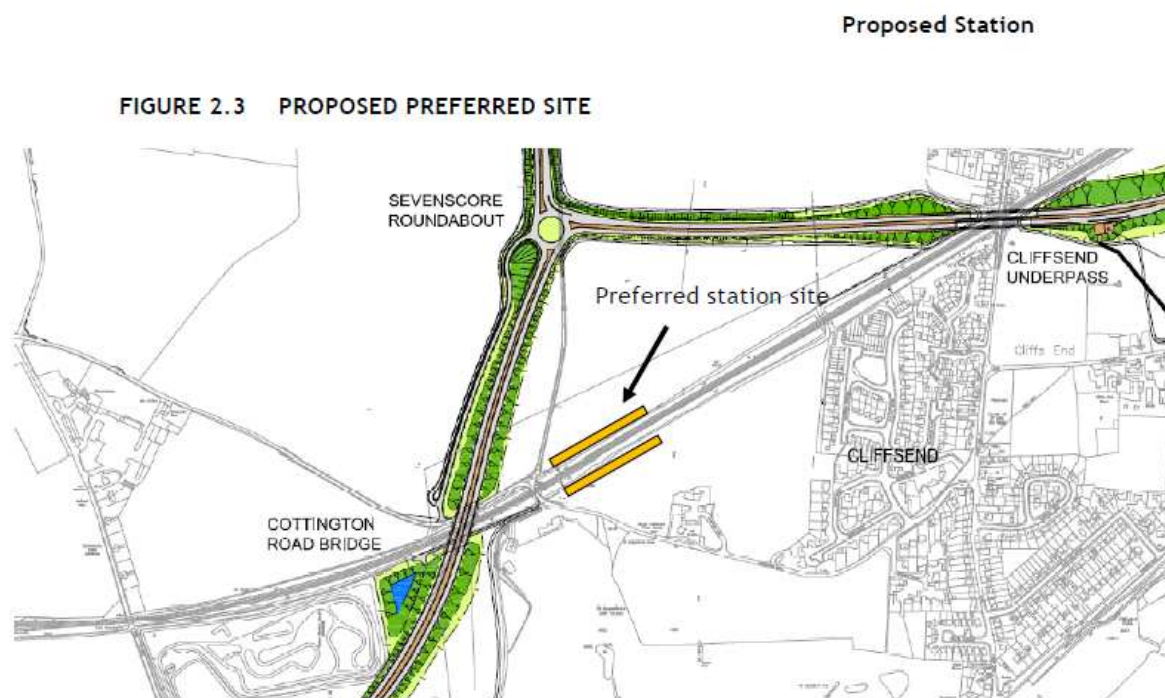
- 1.1 A Parkway station to serve Thanet was first suggested some 6-7 years ago and featured as a policy in the now abandoned Thanet Local Development Framework Core Strategy, consulted on in 2009. It was reported to Cabinet in 2010 and now forms part of the statutory KCC Local Transport Plan (2011-16), as a means to reduce journey times and to provide extra parking capacity due to constraints at Ramsgate Station. It also features in KCC's 20 year transport delivery plan, Growth without Gridlock (2010-30) and the Kent Rail Action Plan (2011)
- 1.2 The estimated cost of the station is £14 million. In early 2014 a Project Board was established and in July 2014 £10million of funding was secured from Government through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 1.3 £2.65 million has been committed by Kent County Council. The funding gap of £1.35 million is being explored with Network Rail and the private sector. No contribution is being sought from Thanet Council.
- 1.4 KCC has recently appointed consultants to draw up detailed proposals with a view to making a planning application in February 2016. It is not yet clear whether this application will fall to be determined by KCC or TDC. The consultants are working closely with Network Rail and Southeastern to ensure their requirements are met.
- 1.5 An initial public consultation is being undertaken by KCC to introduce the project, discuss the proposals and help shape the station design and specification. Contact has already been made with interested parish councils and reports have been sent to both Thanet and Dover Joint Transportation Boards. A formal public consultation will commence on 2nd February 2015. This will include public consultation events in Thanet in Ramsgate, Minster and Cliffsend. Further consultation will be undertaken by KCC when the planning application is submitted.
- 1.6 Prior to initiating this project a rigorous testing of the potential usage of the site was carried out and a Business case was drawn up showing that the potential for development of a station in this location was viable.

1.7 A presentation was made to Cabinet in early 2014 by Kent County Council on the Business Case for the Station.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to construct a relatively straightforward two platform station with disabled access using lifts and ramps with a footbridge. The main feature will be a car park capable of accommodating up to 300 cars in the long term. KCC are looking at a number of models for ownership and operation of this car park.

2.2 The station siting was selected to ensure it was technically feasible for the train operator but also due to its ease of access from the road network and to nearby employment and residential locations. The proposed location is shown on the map below.



3.0 Objectives and Business Case

3.1 The main aim of the proposal is to support inward investment to existing and new development at and around the Manston Airport site, Business Parks at and around Westwood and at Discovery Park in Sandwich. It will provide increased access to High Speed Rail services throughout the District and will provide a journey time of 59 minutes to London Stratford.

3.2 The draft business case concludes that the proposed station will offer a very good return on investment, indicating that for every £1 of investment some £2.12 worth of benefits will be generated over the 60 year appraisal period. The commercial appraisal shows that the station is viable with net generated fares income significantly exceeding the operating and maintenance costs.

3.3 Demand analysis shows that the station will need a car park with 137 spaces on opening rising to 248 after 30 years. Sufficient land exists around the station if additional need arises more quickly. It is noted that the Business case only takes into account committed development and that any future development around the airport or created by an expansion of the enterprise zone has not been included.

- 3.4 Demand at the station will also vary dependent upon the charging regime implemented. For example with parking charges (of £3.50) there would be 106,000 trips in 2021 while with no parking charge some 123,000 trips would be generated.
- 3.5 While a number of trips will be abstracted from existing stations analysis shows that in 2021 there is an addition of over 40,000 new rail trips with the Parkway in operation.
- 3.6 In addition to the Parkway Station Kent County Council are working with Network Rail to deliver a 10 minute planned journey time improvement scheme between Ashford and Ramsgate. The £11.8 million funding is committed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (£5 million) and Network Rail (£6.8 million). This is scheduled for completion by 2019.

4.0 Potential Impacts

- 4.1 The reduction in trips from existing stations (with parking charged for at the Parkway) would be as follows;

Ramsgate 15.35%, Minster 12.98%, Sandwich 12.53%, Margate 2.38%, Broadstairs 2.78%

- 4.2 Kent County Council has had discussions with Network Rail and Southeastern and has received reassurance that the opening of the Parkway will not result in closure or loss of service to existing stations within Thanet. These stations are specified in the current franchise agreement. This position was recently confirmed at a meeting of the Joint Transportation Board.
- 4.3 Times to stations beyond the Parkway will be subject to a 2 minute delay as trains slow and stop there. However this will be offset by the planned 10 minute journey time improvements proposed to be implemented on this line. Therefore, there will be an 8 minute improvement over today's times.
- 4.4 A forecourt improvement scheme is being progressed for Ramsgate Station and this will not be affected by the Parkway proposals. Construction is intended to start in early 2015.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 As part of the initial process consideration was given to alternatives to the Parkway Station and in particular to the possibility of increased parking at Ramsgate Station. Ramsgate currently has 44 spaces including 2 accessible spaces. A large number of station users arriving by car do not use the station due to lack of space and cost and park on residential streets.
- 5.2 Given the potential for growth in Thanet and at Discovery Park any proposal for expansion at Ramsgate could only be considered short term. However 4 options were identified and examined.
- Decking the existing station car park
 - Building a multi storey car park at the Network rail maintenance depot
 - Building a car park on Warre Recreation Ground
 - Acquiring industrial land on Prince's Road

5.3 These options were rejected as they would result in additional traffic in residential areas, increased congestion, noise and air pollution. The depot is a 7-10 minute walk away and the use of Warre Rec would result in loss of green space.

6.0 Current Situation and Public Consultation

6.1 Kent County Council has appointed URS to produce an outline design and prepare a planning application and to undertake the first public consultation in February 2015. A second consultation will take place when the planning application is submitted. A full Environmental Impact Assessment will, be carried out to understand the impacts of the development and appropriate mitigation measures will be incorporated in the design process. Although the Station will have direct access to the East Kent Access Road, which has ample capacity to accommodate future growth a Transport assessment will be produced. The new station will result in reduced congestion in residential areas around Ramsgate station.

6.2 Discussions have commenced with the current landowners to acquire the necessary land.

6.3 Some initial public consultation with parish and town councils has already taken place but a formal public consultation will commence for 8 weeks starting on 2nd February 2015.

6.4 Other meetings are being arranged with various groups but exhibitions are currently proposed as follows;

- Ramsgate Town Hall Saturday 21st February 10.00 – 18.00
- Ramsgate Railway Station Weekday (w/c 16th February) 15.00 – 19.30
- Sandwich Guildhall Thursday 19th February 12.00 – 20.00
- Cliffsend Village Hall Thursday 12th February 12.00 – 20.00
- Discovery Park Weekday (w/c 16th February) 10.00 – 18.00

6.6 Members will be aware that the Parkway Station is supported in the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan document (Policy SP39) which is currently out to public consultation.

7.0 Corporate Implications

7.1 Financial and VAT

7.1.1 There are no financial impacts resulting from this report.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no direct legal impacts resulting from this report

7.3 Corporate

7.3.1 The development of the Parkway Station will enable faster rail journeys to Ashford and London, will have a positive benefit on the perception of Thanet for inward investment and will improve connectivity to the wider jobs market. The proposal would support our Corporate Plan objectives.

7.4 Equity and Equalities

7.4.1 There are no direct equity or equality implications.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The Parkway Station project is being progressed by Kent County Council with a view to opening the Station in January 2019. Further reports will be presented to Cabinet as the scheme is progressed.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 That Cabinet note the current position with regard to progress on the Thanet Parkway Station and confirm their support for the project, subject to the consultation.

10.0 Decision Making Process

10.1 This is a non-key decision.

Contact Officer:	Ged Lucas, Director of Community Services Ext 7008
Reporting to:	Madeline Homer, Acting CEx

Annex List

None	N/A
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Background Papers

Title	Where to Access Document
None	N/A

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Matt Sanham, Finance Manager (Service Support)
Legal	Steven Boyle, Legal Services Manager