

Thanet Parkway Railway Station – A key infrastructure project for East Kent

To: Thanet Joint Transportation Board – 16 December 2014

By: Paul Crick, Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement KCC

Classification: Unrestricted

Ward: Minster and Cliffsend & Pegwell

Summary: This report is for information only. Kent County Council is proposing a new Parkway station on the existing railway line between Minster and Ramsgate stations, situated just to the west of the village of Cliffsend in Thanet. This station is critically required to improve rail access to Manston Airport site, business parks around Westwood and Discovery Park Enterprise Zone to support existing and new development in Thanet and Dover.

For Information

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has for a number of years had an aspiration to deliver a parkway station and associated car park in Thanet to operate as a park and ride facility. A Parkway station, in conjunction with the rail journey time improvements being implemented between Ashford and Ramsgate, will boost inward investment in Thanet and Dover by making them a more attractive location to do business. The connection to London in around an hour as well as the expanded employment catchment area for Thanet and Dover residents will provide a significant economic boost to East Kent.
- 1.2 Providing a Parkway Station is also a component of KCC's statutory Local Transport Plan (2011-16), the Council's 20 year transport delivery plan, Growth without Gridlock (2010-30) and Kent Rail Action Plan (2011).
- 1.3 KCC Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee in July 2014 made recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport on a decision to undertake public consultations and scheme development work, and acquire land in order to take forward the delivery of the Parkway Station, scheduled for completion in the financial year 2018/19.
- 1.4 Technical work has shown that the optimal location of the Parkway station is to the south of Manston Airport site and just to the west of the village of Cliffsend on the Ashford-Ramsgate rail line, and with direct access to the East Kent Access road, as shown in Figure 1 below. The following key elements were considered in selecting the optimal location of the station:
 - Railway operation – signalling, curvature, gradient, level crossing/bridge locations, timetabling
 - Station design
 - Access to road network and
 - Potential property disturbance.

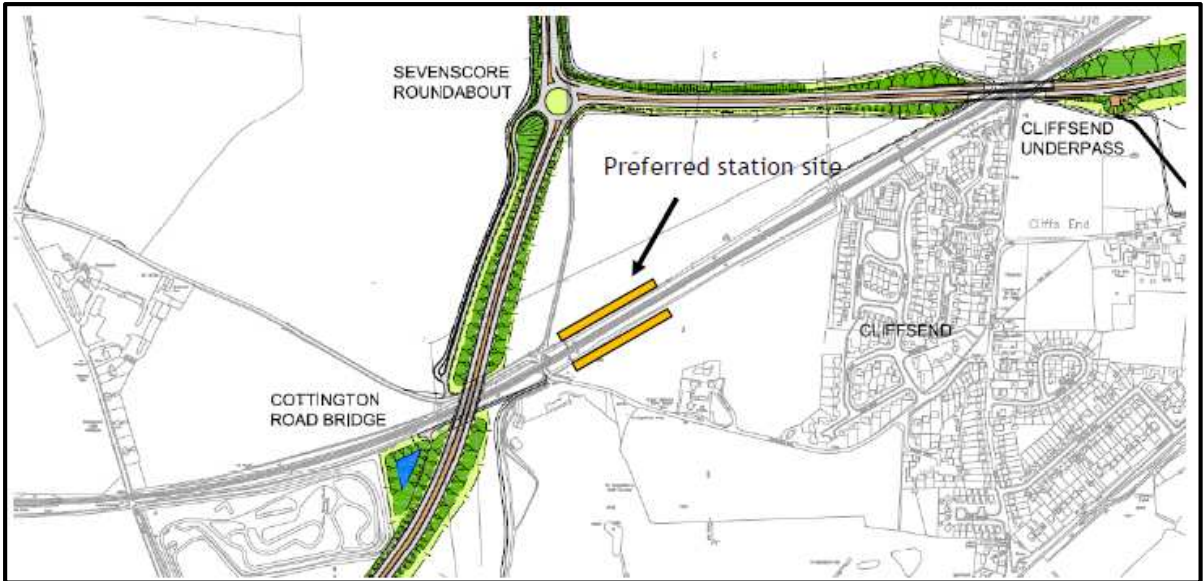


Figure 1: Thanet Parkway proposed location

1.5 The project's objective is to support development at Manston Airport site, business parks around Westwood and Discovery Park Enterprise Zone (shown in Figure 2 below). The following outcomes are expected from the delivery of the station:

- increased inward investment in Thanet and Dover
- thriving Enterprise Zone and surrounding business parks
- greater employment opportunities for Thanet and Dover residents
- access to high speed rail services across district.

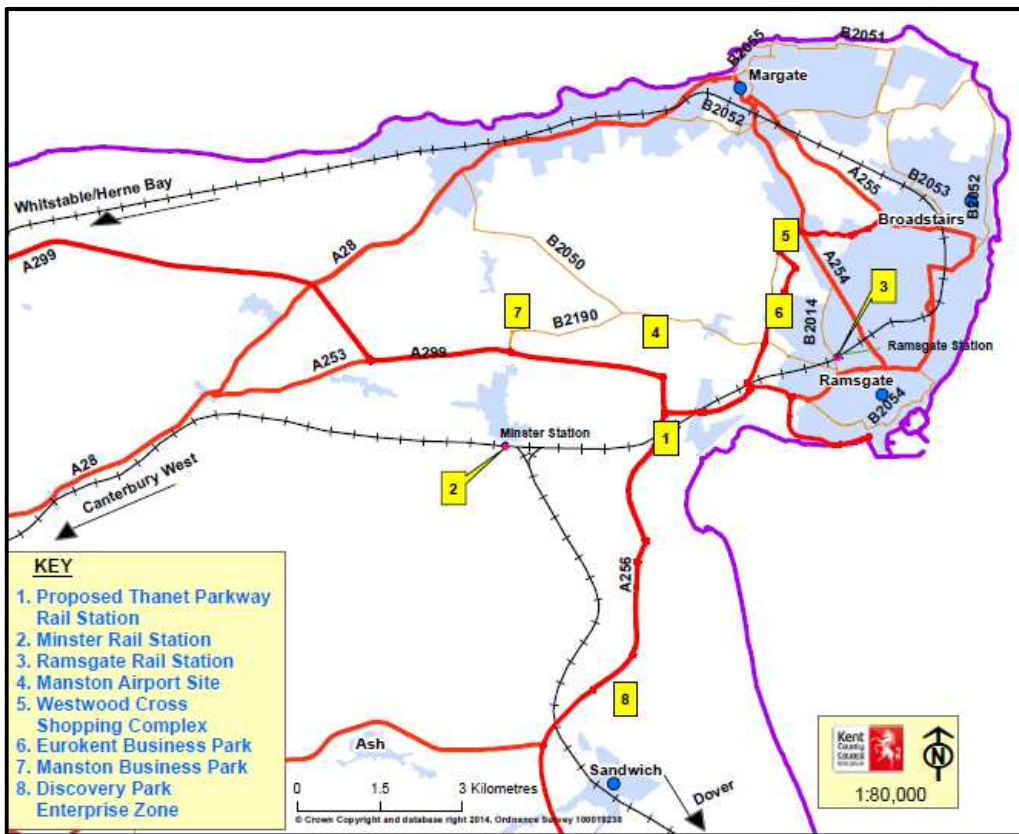


Figure 2: Thanet Parkway and Development in the area

2.0 Draft Station Specification

2.1 The Parkway station will consist of the following elements which are subject to discussions with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company, Southeastern:

- Two station platforms with disabled access
- Disabled access ramps/lifts with footbridge
- Ticket vending machine, waiting area and journey information point
- CCTV and passenger help points
- Car park and associated facilities with disabled access to platforms
- Drop off/ pick up point for buses, taxis and cars
- Access to the new East Kent Access Road and
- Pedestrian and cycle access.

3.0 Draft Business Case

3.1 The cost estimated for the proposed Parkway station is £14 million. In July 2014 KCC secured £10 million of funding from Government through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. £2.65 million is being provided by the KCC. Options to fill the £1.35 million funding gap are being explored with Network Rail and the private sector.

3.2 The draft business case (March 2014) concludes that the proposed Parkway station offers an excellent return on the investment indicating that for every £1 of investment made there will be more than £2.12 worth of benefits generated over the 60 years appraisal period. The commercial analysis shows that the station is viable with net generated fares income significantly exceeding the operating and maintenance costs.

3.3 The demand analysis shows that the station would require a car park with 137 spaces initially, rising to 248 after 30 years, although there is ample land immediately surrounding the station site for further expansion if such additional need arises. However, it should be noted that the business case takes into account committed development only; therefore further development such as further expansion at the Enterprise Zone as well as any development of the airport site have not been included in our assessment.

3.4 Furthermore, given the uncertainty around Manston Airport during March 2014, the business case analysis does not include any activity at the airport site based on the Department for Transport's modelling and appraisal guidance. This could therefore be considered a worst case scenario and any future activity at the airport site will further boost the case for a parkway station.

3.5 The demand Thanet Parkway will generate over time is estimated under the scenarios of the car parking being charged and not charged. Table 1 below shows that for example in 2021 with parking charged there will be a total of 106,000 trips annually at the Parkway station of which just over 40,000 are new trips and just under 66,000 abstracted trips from other stations. With no parking charge the figure would be 123,147 trips annually at the Parkway.

Table 1: Thanet Parkway Annual Demand Breakdown

Thanet Parkway Demand Breakdown	Annual Demand 2021 With Parking Charge	Annual Demand 2021 No Parking Charge	Annual Demand 2031 With Parking Charge	Annual Demand 2031 No Parking Charge
To London – Abstracted	29,298	36,098	31,396	38,811
To London –New	14,686	15,916	15,916	17,146
To Other – Abstracted	36,849	43,972	39,597	47,588
To Other – New	25,534	27,161	27,776	29,150
Abstracted – Total	65,894	80,070	70,993	86,399
New – Total	40,220	43,077	43,439	46,549
TOTAL TRIPS	106,114	123,147	114,432	132,948

- 3.6 In terms of where the abstracted trips come from, Tables 2 and 3 below provide a breakdown of the total abstracted demand from existing stations (Ramsgate, Minster, Sandwich, Margate and Broadstairs). None of the other stations in Thanet and Dover will see any abstraction. The “lost” trips are those that no longer choose to travel by train at all which may be due to the slightly increased journey time to Ramsgate.

Table 2: Abstracted Trips with Parking Charge at Thanet Parkway (2021)

Existing Stations	Abstracted Demand	Lost Demand	Total	Trips with Thanet Parkway Operational	% Reduction in Trips
Ramsgate	46,094	15,155	61,249	393,357	15.35%
Minster	3,893	-	3,893	26,092	12.98%
Sandwich	15,960	-	15,960	127,370	12.53%
Margate	665	3,626	4,291	180,240	2.38%
Broadstairs	1,224	2,709	3,933	143,655	2.78%

Table 3: Abstracted Trips with No Parking Charge at Thanet Parkway (2021)

Existing Stations	Abstracted Demand	Lost Demand	Total	Trips with Thanet Parkway Operational	% Reduction in Trips
Ramsgate	58,200	14,749	72,949	381,250	16.06%
Minster	3,893	-	3,893	26,092	12.98%
Sandwich	18,054	-	18,054	125,274	14.41%
Margate	665	3,626	4,291	180,240	2.38%
Broadstairs	1,224	2,709	3,933	143,655	2.78%

- 3.7 While the tables above show that there is abstraction across all the stations within reasonable distance of Thanet Parkway, they also demonstrate that after abstraction there is still an addition of over 40,000 new rail trips on the network in 2021 with the Parkway in operation. Discussions with Southeastern and Network Rail provide reassurance that the future of railway services calling at stations in Dover and Thanet would not be in doubt as a result of the operation of Thanet Parkway.

4.0 Stakeholders’ Support

- 4.1 KCC are working in partnership with Network Rail to deliver a 10-minute planned journey time improvement scheme on the existing line between Ashford International and Ramsgate Railway stations, which will more than mitigate the time delay of adding the new station to the line providing an overall benefit to those travelling to Ramsgate. The £11.8 million funding for this project is committed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (£5 million) and Network Rail (£6.8 million). The first phase (Ashford-Canterbury West) and second phase (Canterbury West-Ramsgate) will be completed during the financial years of 2016/17 and 2018/19 respectively.
- 4.2 The Journey Time Improvement and Thanet Parkway Railway station projects will enable KCC to achieve its aspiration of bringing Thanet/Discovery Park within an hour journey time of London Stratford, improving perceptions of East Kent for inward investment and raising employment levels through improved accessibility to the wider job market.
- 4.3 A Project Board for Thanet Parkway station was established in January this year, which meets quarterly, and is attended by the Department for Transport, KCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Network Rail, Southeastern, Dover and Thanet District Councils, Design Consultants and KCC Property and Finance teams.
- 4.4 The Department for Transport, Network Rail and Southeastern are supportive of the Parkway station in principle and are working closely with the KCC project team as we progress towards delivery of this project.
- 4.5 The Parkway station was presented to Thanet District Council's Cabinet (29th May 2014), Dover District Council at their Full Council meeting (23rd July 2014) and businesses at Discovery Park Enterprise Zone (16th July 2014). Positive feedback on the Parkway project was received in these meetings.
- 4.6 KCC are currently engaging with the Parish and Town Councils of Thanet and Dover to introduce the Parkway project. A presentation was given to St. Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Parish Council at the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 11th November, at which the project was positively received. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was sent to Sandwich and Broadstairs & St Peters Town Councils. Meetings will also be taking place with:
- Minster Parish Council, Tuesday 2nd December
 - Cliffsend Parish Council, Friday 12th December
 - Ramsgate Town Council, Monday 15th December.
- 4.7 A paper on the Parkway station has been submitted for information for the Dover Joint Transportation Board meeting on the 11th of December.
- 4.8 The Parkway project has also gained the wider support from other key stakeholders: Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, Kent Economic Forum Business Advisory Board and Locate in Kent.

5.0 Options Considered

- 5.1 A range of options were considered by stakeholders and KCC officers to improve rail connectivity to the Manston Airport site, Discovery Park and development sites in Thanet. The following options were considered:
- New Parkway Railway Station
 - Increase car parking provision at existing Ramsgate Railway Station
 - Increase car parking provision at existing Minster Railway Station
 - Shuttle bus from the existing Birchington-On-Sea Railway Station
 - Direct coach service between London and Manston Airport site/ Discovery Park

- Shuttle bus from existing Ramsgate Railway Station.
- 5.2 Increasing car park provision at Ramsgate station and delivering a new Parkway station were shortlisted for further analysis.
- 5.3 Ramsgate station currently has 44 parking spaces, including 2 accessible spaces. A large number of those currently driving to the station do not use the car park due to lack of space, but park on residential streets around the station where there are currently no restrictions.
- 5.4 It is known that development of a car park at Ramsgate is likely to be a short term solution in view of the potential growth arising from Thanet Local Plan, as well as land and viability issues associated with delivering a car park for 300 spaces. The following four options were initially identified and investigated, however all have major issues affecting delivery:
- Decking the existing station car park;
 - Building a multi storey car park at the Network Rail Maintenance Depot;
 - Building a car park at Warre Recreation Ground; and
 - Acquiring industrial land on Prince's Road to construct a car park.
- 5.5 These options were found not to be viable, as they would increase congestion, safety and pollution in the immediate residential area, as well as potentially affecting privacy and well-being of residents in Ramsgate. Further explanation of these options can be found in Annex 1.

6.0 Thanet Parkway Project Impacts and Opportunities

- 6.1 As a typical transport infrastructure project, the Parkway Station will have impacts and opportunities for the local and wider communities in Thanet and Dover. Table 4 below presents a summary of potential impacts perceived by stakeholders and how these impacts will be dealt with in developing the project.

Table 4: Potential Impacts of the Parkway Station

Impact	KCC consideration
Services Calling at other local stations in Thanet and Dover	The demand analysis has shown that whilst there may be a reduction of passenger usage of some local stations, Thanet Parkway will not result in closure or loss of service to these stations, including Minster. These stations are specified in the rail franchise agreement between the Department for Transport and Southeastern.
Additional journey time to Ramsgate Station	The two minute delay on journeys to/from Ramsgate will be offset by the planned 10 minutes Journey Time Improvements on this line, thus the addition of the parkway station will not lead to an increased journey time to/from Ramsgate Station.
Ramsgate Station Forecourt Improvement Scheme	The Thanet Parkway project will not affect Southeastern's Forecourt Improvement scheme at Ramsgate Station. The scheme is progressing, and detailed design drawings have now been completed taking into account the comments which arose from the consultation period. Construction is likely to begin early in 2015 following a tender process in December 2014. A plan for the works is attached as Annex 2.

The Environment	A full Environmental Impact Assessment will be conducted to understand the impact of this development. The appropriate mitigation measures will be incorporated in the design work.
Congestion	The station will have access to the newly built East Kent Access Road which has ample capacity to accommodate future growth. A Transport Assessment will be produced as part of the planning application. The Parkway station will reduce congestion around residential area in Ramsgate as a result of fewer trips to Minster, Sandwich and Ramsgate stations.

6.2 The Parkway station will provide a number of opportunities to the local communities and businesses in Dover and Thanet as shown in Figure 3 below.

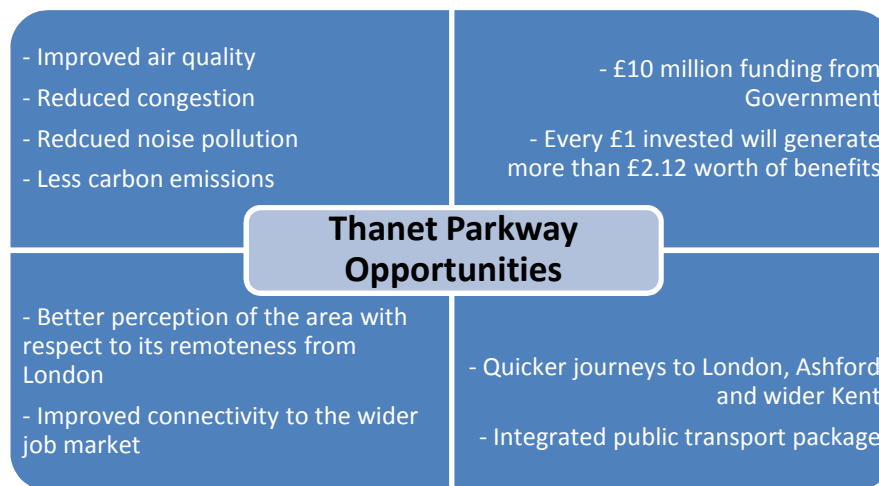


Figure 3: Thanet Parkway Opportunities

7.0 Current Project Status

- 7.1 KCC has recently commissioned URS consultants to produce an outline design and a planning application, including Environmental Impact Assessment, and undertake the first public consultation.
- 7.2 KCC has signed a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) with Network Rail allowing Network Rail to review the project design and enabling access to their asset for site visits and surveys.
- 7.3 The ownership and operation of the station car park is being reviewed by URS consultants, which will have an impact on the station operating cost and identify who the determining Planning Authority would be under each of these options.
- 7.4 KCC has opened discussions with the two land owners to discuss the purchase of the land for the delivery of Thanet Parkway station (including car park and access road from the East Kent Access Road).

8.0 First Public Consultation and Future Steps

- 8.1 The aim of the first public consultation is to have early engagement with the public and stakeholders to get their views on developing the station, and share information on project background and impact/opportunities.
- 8.2 A Consultation and Communication Strategy has been developed and a dedicated web page is being established on KCC website for Thanet Parkway station project.

8.3 The consultation will take place in week commencing 2nd February 2015 for a period of 8 weeks. Meetings with parish councils and community groups in Thanet and Dover, bus and taxi operating companies are being arranged.

Table 5: First Public Consultation Arrangements

Location – Public Events	Date & Time
Ramsgate Town Hall	Saturday 21 st February 2015 (10:00 – 18:00)
Ramsgate Railway Station	Weekday tbc (w/c 16th February 2015) (15:00 – 19:30)
Sandwich Guildhall	Thursday 19 th February 2015 (12:00 – 20:00)
Cliffsend Village Hall	Thursday 12 th February 2015 (12:00 – 20:00)
Discovery Park Enterprise Zone	Weekday tbc (w/c 23rd February) (10:00 – 18:00)

8.4 The next steps following the first public consultation are given below:

- Complete outline design (Aug 2015)
- Second public consultation (Jan 2016)
- Submit planning application (May 2016)
- Complete detailed design (Sep 2017)
- Start construction (Dec 2017)
- Station ready for service (Jan 2019).

9.0 Recommendation(s)

9.1 Members are asked to note this report for their information.

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Annex List

<i>Annex 1</i>	Increased Car Park at Ramsgate Station Option
<i>Annex 2</i>	Ramsgate Forecourt Improvement Scheme Plan

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy