

Kent Rail Strategy consultation and Rail Summit later this month

September 17, 2020



The Kent Rail Strategy 2021, which aims to influence train services in the county for the next decade, goes out to consultation later this month.

Kent County Council has set out certain requirements it considers are needed for rail infrastructure enhancements to keep pace with demand for rail services.

This includes ensuring there is an expanded fleet of new High Speed trains and a replacement fleet for the Metro services; to ensure there are enough trains to meet passenger levels across the High Speed, Mainline and Metro services; and to improve station facilities and communications.

It says the Metro fleet serving West Kent is in 'urgent need of modern, higher capacity trains offering real benefits for these frequent commuter services'.

It adds: "The High Speed fleet serving North and East Kent is in immediate need of strengthening to meet the demand for these highly successful services."

KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Michael Payne said: “We wish to ensure that Kent’s rail network will help deliver economic growth and to represent what our travelling public want and need.

“We don’t pretend to know all the answers, but we do want to ensure our residents’ voices are heard.

“The twin goals of this strategy will ensure we’re standing up for the people of Kent, and with a new South Eastern agreement award expected shortly, and with national rail policy on the cusp of further major change, we need to make sure our voice is heard.”

The strategy also looks at transport priorities for the next decade including environmental issues, by encouraging more people out of their cars and on to trains and by persuading freight operators to move from road to rail.

The strategy will go before the Council’s Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on September 15 and will then go out to public consultation on September 23 for eight weeks until November 17.

The County Council’s annual Rail Summit will this year will be a webinar on October 13, focusing on the new Rail Strategy, with speakers from Kent County Council, Southeastern, Network Rail and High Speed 1.

If you would like to attend email kentrailstrategy2021@kent.gov.uk to ask for an invitation by September 30.

Mr Payne added: “Following the consultation, and taking into account people’s views, we want to successfully influence how train services run in Kent.

“Whether Government decides to move away from the franchise model or not, we want to ensure there is a clear commitment from the operator of the trains and Network Rail managing the lines for a unified railway operation of the Kent rail network over the next decade.”

Photo credit: Kent County Council

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