

## Sevenoaks Rail Travellers' Association Annual Meeting, 10 October 2007

- A well-attended meeting heard contributions from Network Rail and Southeastern while SRTA Chairman Roger Johnson set out the Committee's objectives for the coming year.
- Andrew Munden, Network Rail Route Director (Kent), clarified the respective responsibilities of Network Rail and Southeastern for the infra structure.
  - While stations (other than London and major city termini) are managed and maintained by train operating companies such as Southeastern, non-routine maintenance on stations and car parks is, however, the responsibility of Network Rail.
  - Kent is a busy part of the national network and passenger growth on the line though Maidstone East will require platforms to be lengthened to 8 cars to permit longer trains to be run.
- Plans to improve Thameslink services (now approved) – and their implications for services using London Bridge – were described by Andy Mitchell, Network Rail's Thameslink Project Manager. (Artists' impressions of the re-developments at London Bridge and Blackfriars are shown at the end of this report.) Construction will be in two phases:
  - Phase One (2009-11)
    - Farringdon station will be lengthened for 12 car trains (this needs the closure of the Moorgate branch).
    - Blackfriars will be rebuilt as a 12-car station across the Thames with access from the both south and north of the river. This involves early closure of the terminal platforms on the east side of the through lines, to enable these lines to be moved to the east, before new terminal platforms can be built on the west of the new position of the through lines.
    - A new viaduct will be built over Borough Market to carry two extra tracks west of London Bridge station.
    - During this time, services currently terminating at Blackfriars and Moorgate will be run as through services between Sevenoaks/ Maidstone East and St. Albans (or further north).
  - Phase Two:
    - During 2013-15, London Bridge station will be rebuilt and the rail approaches from New Cross and New Cross Gate will be re-arranged.
  - On completion of this work, services will be run from Ashford via Sevenoaks to Kings Cross and beyond.
- Also attending the meeting was Southeastern's Public Affairs Manager, Mike Gibson. He noted that Kent main lines are operating at the best level ever achieved (94% arriving within target). However, he acknowledged that overcrowding remains a major problem and Southeastern has been unable to increase capacity in line with demand.
- Roger Johnson, welcomed the timetable improvements in December 2006 and 2007, but noted that few further changes were expected before a major re-cast

in 2009. He said that ensuring that those 2009 changes are not to the disadvantage of Sevenoaks commuters will be a key objective for the Committee in the coming year.

- Questions from members concerned:
  - No.1 (Kippington side) Car Park where 7 places had been taken up by contractors. There had been over-selling of season tickets for the car park (and Southeastern agreed to investigate this). It was again emphasised that work (by Network Rail) was needed to remedy regular flooding.
  - The last year had seen little improvement in the frequency of ticket-checking of passengers sitting in first class accommodation, especially on Charing Cross-Tunbridge Wells services between London Bridge and Chelsfield. (Southeastern will liaise with the Chairman to investigate).

