

Shepway District Council

**Transport Strategy  
Rail Travel**

January 2011

Prepared for  
**Shepway District Council**

## Revision Schedule

### Transport Strategy: Rail Travel January 2011

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 URS / Scott Wilson has been commissioned by Shepway District Council (SDC) to prepare the Transport Strategy for the District. The remit of the Transport Strategy is to include and consider both transport matters which relate to the existing District area, as well as those relating to the future growth of Shepway.
- 1.1.2 SDC is currently preparing its Core Strategy, which is its lead document in the Local Development Framework. Within this, there are a number of Strategic Site allocations, where it is envisaged that future growth in the district could take place. The Transport Strategy will feed into the Core Strategy, which has been subject to public consultation at both the issues and options, and preferred options stages.

## 1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the existing opportunities for residents, employees and visitors within the Shepway District and those wishing to travel into the District, to travel by rail and to identify where issues exist or where potential improvements can be made to the rail network and operation of the services, if appropriate.
- 1.2.2 As part of this report, options to address the issues have been presented which will in turn inform the comprehensive, multi-modal Transport Strategy being prepared for the District. This report therefore provides the background to how the varying options were considered and developed.
- 1.2.3 In preparing this note, the roles of the relevant 'rail groups' have been identified and are summarised below:
- Department for Transport (DfT) Rail – sets out the national policy objectives
  - Network Rail – operates and maintains the rail network
  - Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) – safety and economic regulator of the rail network
  - Train Operating Companies (TOC) – in the main, hold franchises let by the government to operate rail services covering regions of the national network
  - Kent County Council (KCC) – through their Local Transport Plan, seek to manage and promote access to and the provision of station facilities
  - Shepway District Council (SDC) – are the Local Planning Authority
- 1.2.4 In addition to the above, the role of the rail franchise(s) has also been considered as the status and duration of these can affect investment programmes and operation practices. In this case, it is understood that Southeastern currently hold the franchise for the Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) area, which runs from April 2006 until March 2014. The franchise area includes 179 stations.

## 1.3 Structure

1.3.1 The remainder of this section of the Transport Strategy is set out as follows:

- Section 2 summarises the existing situation in Shepway, specifically in terms of how rail services are currently provided;
- Section 3 seeks to identify the issues which currently exist; and,
- Section 4 presents the proposed rail strategy.

## 2 Existing Situation

### 2.1 Background

2.1.1 Mainline rail services in Shepway are provided by Southeastern, who operate facilities at four stations, namely:

- Folkestone Central;
- Folkestone West;
- Sandling; and,
- Westenhanger.

2.1.2 All four of the rail stations in Shepway provide direct connections to Dover to the east and Ashford to the north west. All four stations also provide direct rail access into London, to London Bridge, Cannon Street (during peak hours), Waterloo East and Charing Cross, via Ashford and Tonbridge.

2.1.3 Folkestone Central and Folkestone West stations also offer direct services into London, at St. Pancras. A summary of the rail network which is available to / from Shepway is illustrated in **FIGURE 2.1**.

**FIGURE 2.1 Rail Network available to / from Shepway**



2.1.4 The service between Folkestone's two stations, Central and West, and London (St. Pancras) is facilitated by the flagship High Speed 1 (HS1) rail service. This is the first high speed domestic train service in the UK.

- 2.1.5 The service provides a connection between Folkestone and London which takes less than one hour, from station to station, offering a potential saving of 44 minutes over conventional rail services. A comparison of the associated journey times is provided below in **TABLE 2.1**.

**TABLE 2.1 Journey Time Comparison (Folkestone to London), in minutes**

Station	Mainline	High Speed	Saving
Folkestone Central	101	57	44
Folkestone West	99	55	44

- 2.1.6 The HS1 domestic service commenced operation on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and according to Southeastern, has steadily been drawing additional rail users from around Kent, who wish to take advantage of the reduced journey times to and from central London.
- 2.1.7 Of the four stations, it is noted that Folkestone Central is the most intensely used, benefiting from mainline and high speed rail services and its location within Folkestone town centre. Folkestone West is the district's second most intensely used station, with the two remaining stations at Sandling and Westenhanger having lower levels of patronage.
- 2.1.8 Overall, more than 1.3 million passengers were recorded as accessing or egressing the rail network via one of Shepway's four stations in 2009; over 900,000 of which journeys started or ended at Folkestone Central. A summary of rail passenger data for Shepway District is provided below in **TABLE 2.2**, based on data available from the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR), for the period 2008 - 2009.

**TABLE 2.2 ORR Rail Data for Shepway (2009); Passenger Entries and Exits, by Station**

Station	Total Journeys	Full Price	Reduced Price	Season Tickets
Folkestone Central	<b>929,371</b>	181,999	384,870	362,502
Folkestone West	<b>217,579</b>	44,097	78,208	95,274
Sandling	<b>151,376</b>	24,850	56,352	70,174
Westenhanger	<b>62,840</b>	9,492	20,510	32,838

- 2.1.9 This information, as well as that relating to the accessibility modes of the stations, was presented at the consultation exercises which were undertaken as part of the development of this strategy.

## 2.2 Policy

### Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001)

- 2.2.1 PPG13 sets out the Government's guidance for integrating planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to reduce the need to travel and promote public transport, walking and cycling.
- 2.2.2 Key objectives relevant to sustainable travel and rail travel in particular outlined in PPG13 include:
- Promoting more sustainable transport choices;
  - Ensuring that development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offer a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking and cycling;

- Giving priority to people over ease of traffic movement and plan to provide more road space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in town centres, local neighbourhoods and other areas with a mixture of land uses; and,
- Ensuring the needs of disabled people as pedestrians, public transport users and motorists are considered.

### Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

- 2.2.3 PPS1 sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system and states that development planning should:

*“Aspire to make places better for people and deliver development where communities need it and which is sustainable”*

- 2.2.4 In relation to sustainable travel modes, and in particular rail travel, PPS1 states that development should:

- Ensure high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources;
- Provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure, community facilities, open space, sport and recreation by ensuring that as far as reasonable everyone can access services on foot, bicycle or public transport without relying on the private car; and,
- Reduce the need to travel and encourage public transport provision to ensure more sustainable patterns of transport development.

### Delivering a Sustainable Railway: DfT White Paper (2007)

- 2.2.5 The rail industry has an established five year planning cycle based around the Office of the Rail Regulator's (ORR) review of Network Rail funding. The White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' covers the next of these review periods, from 2009 until 2014.

- 2.2.6 Within the aforementioned document, five key areas are set out in relation to the delivery and implementation of the strategy. These are:

- **Reliability** – The Secretary of State has set out a number of 'reasonable requirements' with regard to the rail network, one of which relates to the reliability of the services which are provided. In this context, the White Paper seeks to promote, support and monitor reliability improvements of rail services across the network, including measuring the degree of 'lateness' of services.
- **Safety** – This area is of key concern and the ORR, as safety regulator, is constantly looking to provide safety improvements for rail travel. In doing so, the work is being supported by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch through its role in investigating the causes of accidents and incidents, and making recommendations to prevent further accidents occurring.

- **Capacity** – As part of wider transport objectives, there are a number of national policies which seek to increase the use of the rail network and the use of trains, as a mode, for a range of journey purposes. In this case, the White Paper seeks to support the close co-ordination of the rail industry (led by Network Rail) and the Department for Transport, in considering capacity enhancements.
- **Major Projects** – In preparing the White Paper, the Secretary of State identified that the motivation would be to derive tangible outputs from the railway (eg. greater capacity, reduced number of accidents etc), rather than the delivery of a list of schemes. Major Projects have tended and continue to be locally led therefore, through the rail industry and appropriate planning and local authority representatives.
- **Industry Wide Initiatives** – To deliver industry wide initiatives, the Government set aside £150 million, specifically for the modernisation of a number of stations, across the national network. Notwithstanding this, the Government made it clear that it expected plans to include partnerships with developers and local authorities to secure additional funding and ensure that the projects respond to local needs and opportunities.

### Kent Local Transport Plan 2 (2006 – 2011)

2.2.7 The second Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Kent, covering the period up until 2011, was submitted in March 2006 and sets out the transport vision and programme of works for the County. The document outlines ten strategy objectives for the County, which comprises:

- **Accessibility:** Kent County Council (KCC) will support independence and reduce social exclusion by improving transport links to key destinations and bringing services closer to communities;
- **Demand Management:** KCC will seek to reduce the demand for transport both within and through Kent;
- **Environment, Heritage and Communities:** KCC will stabilise and, where possible, reverse the adverse effect of transport and its infrastructure on the natural and built environment and on local communities;
- **Health:** KCC will improve the health of Kent residents by reducing the impact of transport, encouraging increased physical activity and enhancing access to key health facilities;
- **Integration:** KCC will encourage integration to maximise the use of sustainable modes and therefore widen choice for Kent residents;
- **Keep Kent Moving:** KCC will manage and maintain the local highway network to maximise the safe and efficient use of road space and provide reliable journey times;
- **Road Safety:** KCC will strive to provide a safe and secure transport system for all users throughout the county;
- **Sustainable Regeneration:** KCC will promote development that reduces the need to travel while supporting the local economy;

- **UK Connections:** KCC will press for more efficient, sustainable transport links with London and the rest of the UK; and,
- **UK Gateway:** KCC will ensure that international traffic covers its costs, minimises the impact on Kent and its residents and maximises the use of rail.

2.2.8 The overarching objectives for the Kent LTP specifically require that sustainable transport plays a role in reducing demand on the highway network and providing affordable and legible accessibility for all. Rail travel therefore features as an important aspect of both existing and future plans within the County and it is noted that the LTP supports strong links to London and the rest of the UK, thereby maximising the use of rail travel.

### **Kent Local Transport Plan 3 (2011 – 2016)**

- 2.2.9 Kent County Council is currently preparing its third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) to cover the period 2011 to 2016. This will help deliver the regeneration of Kent as outlined in the 'Unlocking Kent's Potential – Framework for Regeneration' document. The LTP3 document(s) is currently at the consultation stage of the process, ending in December 2010.
- 2.2.10 Notwithstanding this, the Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) 2007-2017 detailed in LTPs states that provision should be made for sustainable transport systems and high quality green space.
- 2.2.11 Moreover, the CAIP states that new developments should include opportunities to include facilities which reduce traffic congestion, improve safety and provide community recreational facilities.
- 2.2.12 In building on the objectives and motives of the outgoing LTP2, the latest version of Kent's LTP (3) continues to promote rail travel as a key means of transport in the district, particularly recognising the benefits of the High Speed rail connections which are provided to / from London.

## **2.3 Mainline Rail Services in Shepway**

- 2.3.1 This section provides further information concerning the four mainline stations in Shepway, as well as the wider rail services which are available. A plan locating the stations and illustrating the main connections is provided at **FIGURE 2.2**.

### **Folkestone Central**

- 2.3.2 Folkestone Central station is located off Station Approach in Folkestone town centre. Step free access is available to all platforms across the whole station. A waiting room is provided in addition to a seating area, a station buffet and toilet facilities. Images of the station are provided at **FIGURES 2.3 and 2.4**.

**FIGURES 2.3 and 2.4: Folkestone Central Rail Station**



- 2.3.3 The station is accessible on foot and by bicycle, as well as by bus, taxi and private car. As such a range of parking facilities are available, including:
- 15 Sheffield Stands (30 cycle parking locking points)
  - Accommodation for eight taxis (to layover)
  - 4 drop off bays (based on 20 minute waiting restrictions)
  - 3 Disabled parking bays
  - 64 Vehicle parking bays
- 2.3.4 The car parking which is provided at the station is managed by an independent operator and can be used by both infrequent users and those with season or annual permits. Parking charges apply at a rate of £3 per day or £14.50 per week.
- 2.3.5 It is possible to walk to Folkestone Central from a number of locations within Folkestone town centre, including the bus station located at Bouverie Place. The bus station is approximately 9 minutes away from Folkestone Central, on foot.
- 2.3.6 It is noted however, that a number of bus services pass in the immediate vicinity of the station. These include the:
- 16 / 16a, 17
  - 71, 72, 73
  - 77 / 78
  - 91
  - 127
  - 160
- 2.3.7 All of the bus services listed above serve the two bus stops located in the immediate vicinity of Folkestone Central station, to the south of the railway bridge on Cheriton Road. In addition, the 101, 102 and 105 routes also offer some early morning services at these locations.

2.3.8 In addition, there are a number of other combined bus services which also pass in the vicinity of Folkestone Central, by virtue of Castle Hill Avenue, the nearby one-way gyratory and the bus station. A plan illustrating the availability of bus stops in the vicinity of the station is provided at **FIGURE 2.5**.

2.3.9 In terms of rail services, Folkestone Central provides connections to Dover to the east and Ashford to the north west, as the nearest mainline station stops in Kent. Onward connection to the UK network is therefore available and the station also benefits from providing one of Shepway's two connections with High Speed 1. A summary of the services available at the station and the average frequencies in the morning and evening peak hours is provided below in **TABLE 2.3**.

**TABLE 2.3 Folkestone Central Rail Services and Average Frequencies**

Service	No. of Services AM <sup>1</sup> (0800-0900)	Ave. Journey Time AM (mins)	No. of Services PM <sup>2</sup> (1700-1800)	Ave. Journey Time PM (mins)
To / From Dover (east)	3	11	3	11
To / From Ashford (north west)	3	18	3	18
To / From London (mainline)	2	104	2	101
To / From London (High Speed 1)	2	58	2	55

<sup>1</sup>AM refers to number of services arriving at the destination between 0800-0900, having left Folkestone Central

<sup>2</sup>PM refers to number of services departing the origin between 1700-1800, bound for Folkestone Central

## Folkestone West

2.3.10 Folkestone West station is located off Shorncliffe Road, to the west of Folkestone Central and the town centre. Step free access is available across the whole station, although it is noted that to avoid the underpass it is necessary to walk along the station approach on the north side, under the railway bridge on Beachborough Road, and along the avenue through the car park on the south side. A waiting room is provided in addition to a seating area and toilet facilities. Images of the station are provided below at **FIGURES 2.6 and 2.7**.

**FIGURES 2.6 and 2.7 Folkestone West Rail Station**



- 2.3.11 The station is accessible on foot and by bicycle, as well as by bus and coach, taxi and private car. As such a range of parking facilities are available, including:
- 9 Sheffield Stands (18 cycle parking locking points)
  - Accommodation for two taxis (to layover)
  - 4 Coach parking bays
  - 3 drop off bays (based on 20 minute waiting restrictions)
  - 4 Disabled parking bays
  - 95 Vehicle parking bays
- 2.3.12 The car parking which is provided at the station is managed by an independent operator and can be used by both infrequent users and those with season or annual permits. Parking charges apply at a rate of £3 per day or £14.50 per week.
- 2.3.13 It is possible to walk to Folkestone West from local residential properties and businesses although this station is considered to be less accessible, by foot, than Folkestone Central as it does not benefit from a central urban location in the same way. As such, the station is assumed to serve different patrons in the district as although it is accessible by foot and bicycle, it is likely to cater for a greater number of car drivers or passengers who interchange at the station.
- 2.3.14 Bus connections are also possible at Folkestone West and a number of bus services pass in the immediate vicinity of the station. These include the:
- 77 / 78 on Shorncliffe Road
- 2.3.15 In addition, there are a number of other bus services which also pass in the vicinity of Folkestone West, along Cheriton Road. A plan illustrating the availability of bus stops in the vicinity of the station is provided at **FIGURE 2.8**.
- 2.3.16 In terms of rail services, Folkestone West provides connections to Dover to the east (via Folkestone Central) and Ashford to the north west, as the nearest mainline station stops in Kent. Onward connection to the UK network is therefore available and the station also benefits from providing the second of Shepway's two connections with High Speed 1. A summary of the services available at the station and the average frequencies in the morning and evening peak hours is provided below in **TABLE 2.4**.

**TABLE 2.4 Folkestone West Rail Services and Average Frequencies**

Service	No. of Services AM <sup>1</sup> (0800-0900)	Ave. Journey Time AM (mins)	No. of Services PM <sup>2</sup> (1700-1800)	Ave. Journey Time PM (mins)
To / From Dover (east)	3	14	3	14
To / From Ashford (north west)	3	16	3	16
To / From London (mainline)	1	96	1	97
To / From London (High Speed 1)	2	56	2	52

<sup>1</sup>AM refers to number of services arriving at the destination between 0800-0900, having left Folkestone West

<sup>2</sup>PM refers to number of services departing the origin between 1700-1800, bound for Folkestone West

## Sandling

- 2.3.17 Sandling station is located off Sandling Road to the north of Hythe and to the west of Folkestone West. Step free access is available across the whole station although it is noted that interchange is provided via a road bridge, for those with mobility impairments. A waiting room and seating area is provided although no further passenger facilities are available. Images of the station are provided below at **FIGURES 2.9 and 2.10**.

**FIGURES 2.9 and 2.10 Sandling Rail Station**



- 2.3.18 The station is considered to be largely inaccessible by foot, due to its location to the north of the urban area of Hythe, although a small number of journeys may be able to be made using this mode and it is noted that footpaths are provided. The station can be accessed by bicycle however, as well as by bus, taxi and private car. As such a range of parking facilities are available, including:

- 2 Sheffield Stands (4 cycle parking locking points)
- 6 Cycle Lockers
- 2 drop off bays (based on 20 minute waiting restrictions)
- 2 Disabled parking bays
- 92 Vehicle parking bays

- 2.3.19 The car parking which is provided at the station is managed by an independent operator and can be used by both infrequent users and those with season or annual permits. Parking charges apply at a rate of £3 per day or £14.50 per week.

- 2.3.20 Although the station is relatively inaccessible to pedestrians, due mainly to its location, it is noted that high quality provision is made for cyclists in the form of both Sheffield Stand locking points and cycle lockers. Bus connections are also possible at Sandling with a limited number of bus services passing the station and actually stopping there. These include the:

- 10a Folkestone / Ashford
- 558 Hythe-Canterbury Service

- 2.3.21 In addition, a few journeys in the peak periods on route 10a to / from Hythe, Sellindge and Ashford also pass the station along Sandling Road. It is also noted that the 558 will have a new timetable operating from January 2011, which will allow connections to be provided at Sandling with trains to and from Ashford and London, for passengers travelling to and from Hythe. This will re-introduce an important local facility for residents of Hythe and Saltwood. A plan illustrating the location of the bus stop at the station is provided at **FIGURE 2.11**.
- 2.3.22 In terms of rail services, Sandling provides connections to Dover to the east (via both Folkestone stations) and Ashford to the north west, as the nearest mainline station stops in Kent. Onward connection to the UK network is therefore available. A summary of the services available at the station and the average frequencies in the morning and evening peak hours is provided below in **TABLE 2.5** (NB. there are no direct High Speed services to / from London serving Sandling station).

**TABLE 2.5 Sandling Rail Services and Average Frequencies**

Service	No. of Services AM <sup>1</sup> (0800-0900)	Ave. Journey Time AM (mins)	No. of Services PM <sup>2</sup> (1700-1800)	Ave. Journey Time PM (mins)
To / From Folkestone Central (east)	2	7	2	7
To / From Dover (east)	2	19	2	19
To / From Ashford (north west)	2	12	2	12
To / From London (mainline)	2	62	2	62

<sup>1</sup>AM refers to number of services arriving at the destination between 0800-0900, having left Sandling

<sup>2</sup>PM refers to number of services departing the origin between 1700-1800, bound for Sandling

## Westenhanger

- 2.3.23 Westenhanger station is located off Stone Street, to the north east of Folkestone racecourse. The station is to the north of Newingreen and Lympne and to the east of Sellindge. Step free access is available partially at Westenhanger although wheelchair access is only available at Platform 1. Sheltered seating is provided on both platforms, although no further passenger facilities are available. Images of the station are provided below at **FIGURES 2.12 and 2.13**.

**FIGURES 2.12 and 2.13 Westenhanger Rail Station**



- 2.3.24 The station is considered to be largely inaccessible by foot, in a similar way to Sandling, as there is only a limited resident population in the immediate vicinity of the station. Nonetheless, a small number of journeys may be able to be made on foot, potentially by residents of Stone Street.

2.3.25 The station can potentially be accessed by bicycle however, as well as by taxi and private car. As such a range of parking facilities are available, including:

- No formal cycle parking facilities are provided (see **FIGURE 2.14** below)
- 1 Disabled parking bay
- 9 Vehicle parking bays (within the station area)
- 6 vehicle spaces (unmarked, on the approach road to the station)

**FIGURE 2.14 Informal Cycle Parking Facilities at Westenhanger Rail Station**



- 2.3.26 Whilst no formal bicycle parking facilities are provided at Westenhanger, informal cycle parking has been observed at the station on a number of occasions.
- 2.3.27 The car parking which is provided at the station is managed by Southeastern themselves and it is noted that Westenhanger provides the only rail parking facilities of the four stations in the district, free of charge. There are only 15 vehicle spaces provided however, although on street parking is also currently available on Stone Street, which is also not subject to duration or charging restrictions.
- 2.3.28 The Route 10 bus service passes through Newingreen to the south of Westenhanger station although it is not considered to be close enough to provide an effective interchange mode with the available rail services.
- 2.3.29 In terms of rail services, Westenhanger provides connections to Dover to the east (via both Folkestone stations and Sandling) and Ashford to the north west, as the nearest mainline station stops in Kent. Onward connection to the UK network is therefore available. A summary of the services available at the station and the average frequencies in the morning and evening peak hours is provided in **TABLE 2.6** (NB. there are no direct High Speed services to / from London serving Westenhanger station).

**TABLE 2.6 Westenhanger Rail Services and Average Frequencies**

Service	No. of Services AM <sup>1</sup> (0800-0900)	Ave. Journey Time AM (mins)	No. of Services PM <sup>2</sup> (1700-1800)	Ave. Journey Time PM (mins)
To / From Folkestone Central (east)	2	10	2	10
To / From Dover (east)	2	22	2	22
To / From Ashford (north west)	2	9	2	9
To / From London (mainline)	2	60	2	60

<sup>1</sup>AM refers to number of services arriving at the destination between 0800-0900, having left Westenhanger

<sup>2</sup>PM refers to number of services departing the origin between 1700-1800, bound for Westenhanger

## Mainline Rail Service Summary

- 2.3.30 Of the four mainline rail stations which are provided in Shepway, it is noted that a range of different services and facilities are available. Furthermore, given the locations of the different stations, it is also recognised that the user characteristics of these stations also vary.
- 2.3.31 As such, the accessibility of each of the four stations was discussed with local stakeholders as part of the workshops which were held to inform the preparation of this Transport Strategy. A summary of the overall accessibility of each station and what has been considered to be each of the stations primary user characteristics in terms of accessibility and travel is provided in **TABLE 2.7** below.

**TABLE 2.7 Rail Station Accessibility and User Characteristics in Shepway**

Station	Mode Accessibility (for Interchange)				Primary Accessibility Function
	Foot	Bicycle	Bus	Car	
Folkestone Central	✓	✓	✓	✓	Interchange at station used by all modes
Folkestone West	✓	✓	✓	✓	Primarily car driver, but other modes also well used
Sandling	Limited	✓	✓	✓	Primarily car driver, limited mode choice
Westenhanger	Limited	Limited	*	✓	Solely car driver, very limited mode choice

## 2.4 Other Rail Services in Shepway

### Folkestone East / Harbour Rail Link

- 2.4.1 In addition to the four mainline stations, rail services were historically provided to / from Folkestone Harbour via the town's first rail station, located at Folkestone East (which is understood to also be referred to as Folkestone Junction). No services have operated here however, since 2001.
- 2.4.2 The station originally processed both domestic rail travel and that associated with the port. It is noted however, that the station at Folkestone East is comparatively less accessible than the two stations now provided in the town and most notably, the Folkestone Central station.
- 2.4.3 It is understood that some options have been considered for the now disused Folkestone East station including its re-opening, re-use as a Parkway Station or Park and Rail / Ride site or for possible links with Folkestone Harbour.

- 2.4.4 In this context, an unused rail link continues to exist between Folkestone East and the Harbour and a local group called the Remembrance Line Association (RLA) are actively promoting the re-instatement of the link. It is understood that a number of options have been considered including a full rail replacement, light rail connection and a sustainable pedestrian or cycle link. It is worth noting that this connection does not fall within the control of Network Rail, who are the asset owner for the mainline rail network.
- 2.4.5 The continued and intensified use of the harbour is also being promoted and it is understood that there is some momentum for a passenger ferry service between Folkestone and Boulogne.

### **Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RHDR)**

- 2.4.6 Shepway also has its own light rail service, provided in the form of the 15-gauge Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway (RHDR). There are seven stations on the RHDR route, located at Hythe, Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay, Romney Warren Halt, New Romney, Romney Sands and Dungeness. The route of the RHDR is also shown at **FIGURE 2.2**.
- 2.4.7 The service predominantly caters for tourists and enthusiasts crossing the Romney Marsh from Hythe in the east to Dungeness in the west. In addition however, the service also provides a well-used route for school children.
- 2.4.8 As such, the Kent Freedom Pass which Kent County Council operate for all children in the county attending school between years 7 and 11, can be used to travel for free on any public bus service in the county. In addition, the Freedom Pass is also accepted on the RHDR, where it is possible to interchange between the light rail system and bus travel, and vice versa.
- 2.4.9 More generally, the PLUS BUS system also operates in Shepway which allows discounted tickets to be purchased, permitting unlimited bus travel when accompanied by a rail ticket. There are therefore very good opportunities in the district for rail users to interchange with the bus services which are available.

## 3 Issue Identification

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section is concerned with the identification of underlying issues relating to rail based travel within Shepway, such that the Transport Strategy can be delivered and implemented with a view to addressing these particular matters.
- 3.1.2 With this in mind, issues have been identified based around the four stations that are available and have been reported thus far. Where appropriate, general issues regarding rail travel have also been identified.

### 3.2 Approach

- 3.2.1 Throughout the preparation of the Transport Strategy and through consultation with SDC, KCC, the Highways Agency and the wide range of stakeholders who have been engaged through the Workshop Consultation exercises, particular issues regarding rail travel have tended to focus around two main topics:
- Bus Links at Rail Stations; and,
  - Station Facilities.
- 3.2.2 It is noted however, that under the heading of 'station facilities', parking at transport interchanges has also been identified as part of the consultation process. As such, for each of the rail stations in Shepway, issues have been identified relating to the following topics:
- Station Accessibility (including bus links); and,
  - Station Facilities (including parking).
- 3.2.3 The above issues have therefore been considered for each of the rail stations, as summarised in turn below, in addition to any more specific matters which may apply at one or more of the stations specifically.

### 3.3 Folkestone Central

#### Station Accessibility

- 3.3.1 The rail station at Folkestone Central is considered as being the most accessible of the stations in the district, by virtue of its location. As such, the station acts as the conduit for the largest proportion of rail journeys in Shepway whilst it provides fewer car parking spaces than both Folkestone West and Sandling.
- 3.3.2 Journeys made to and from the station on foot, bicycle or bus, as well as drop-off / pick-up trips and taxi connections are therefore all considered as being feasible options for travellers wishing to access the rail network at Folkestone Central.

- 3.3.3 It is noted however, that the visibility of Folkestone Central station as the primary station in the district could be improved. Whilst it benefits from its location near to the main town centre the station does not act as a focal point within the town.
- 3.3.4 For a number of mode users, the perception of the station is therefore reduced by the main station building and entrance being located away from the visible areas of the highway. The access to Folkestone Central station off Cheriton Road is illustrated below in **FIGURE 3.1**.

**FIGURE 3.1 Folkestone Central – Access to Station (from the south)**



- 3.3.5 The access to Folkestone Central station is shown in **FIGURE 3.1**, on the left hand side, beyond the zebra crossing. As shown, the station has very limited frontage and there is no clear signing to indicate the location of the station.
- 3.3.6 There is also very limited signage to the station if approaching from the other direction, as shown in **FIGURE 3.2**.

**FIGURE 3.2 Folkestone Central – Access to Station (from the north)**

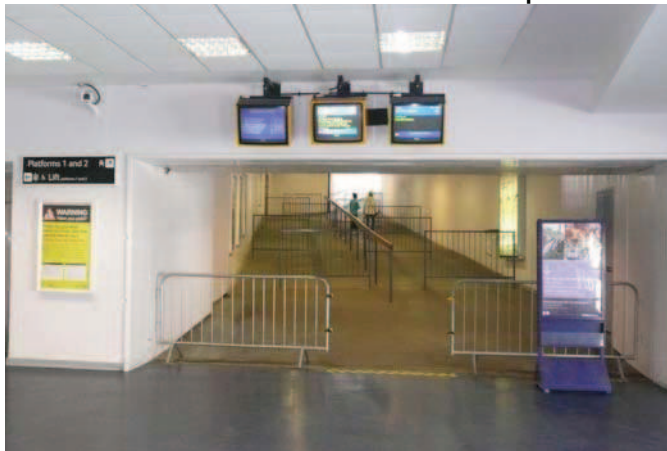


- 3.3.7 The visibility of the central station in Folkestone is therefore considered as being an issue which may reduce the number of patrons which potentially use the rail network, particularly those visiting Folkestone or who are less familiar with the local area. This therefore applies to car drivers (and those being dropped off / picked up), as well as those travelling on foot or by bicycle.
- 3.3.8 In addition, the provision of bus stops in the vicinity of the station is not clearly legible as services are provided at different locations. For example, there are four main bus services provided in close proximity to Folkestone Central station (16 / 16a, 77 / 78, 101 / 102 and 127) but depending on the required service, these are provided at three different locations (Radnor Park Road, Cheriton Road and Shorncliffe Road). This is also discussed in the **WALK, CYCLE & LEISURE STRATEGY NOTE**.
- 3.3.9 In particular relation to the bus stop on Cheriton Road (adjacent to the Co-op Shop), discussions with Stagecoach have identified that wheelchair access to bus services at this location can be restricted as vehicles park in or near to the bus stop. It is understood that a build out had been provided at this location, but this has since been removed. The existing stop has a bus boarder, but this is often not accessible due to the aforementioned parking which has been observed to occur at this location.
- 3.3.10 It is also noted that there are a wide range of bus services available from the main bus station located in Folkestone, at Bouverie Place. However, the links between the bus and rail stations have previously been identified as not being easy to follow, particularly by those visiting the area. This could be significant given that initiatives such as the PLUS BUS scheme are in place, but may be underutilised due to the bus and rail networks not being as co-ordinated as they could be.
- 3.3.11 It is noted however, that a new bus information board has been provided by KCC, located at Folkestone Central station, showing the location of bus stops and timetable information for those stops. There is a frequent bus service between Folkestone Central rail station and the bus station at Bouverie Place.

### Station Facilities

- 3.3.12 Parking facilities at Folkestone Central have not been identified as an issue, through the consultation process associated with the preparation of this Transport Strategy.
- 3.3.13 It is also noted that as Shepway's main and most well used rail station, Folkestone Central offers the most facilities of the four stations in the district. These include a waiting room and supplementary platform seating, station buffet and toilet facilities.
- 3.3.14 A number of these facilities are reasonably old however and the layout of the station is in places unattractive and restrictive. An example of a station ramp at Folkestone Central is illustrated in **FIGURE 3.3**.

**FIGURE 3.3 Folkestone Central – Station Ramp**



## 3.4 Folkestone West

### Station Accessibility

- 3.4.1 Folkestone West provides the towns second rail station and is located in a more suburban and therefore residential area than the main, Folkestone Central station, in the town centre. Notwithstanding this, the station is accessible by those travelling on foot and by bicycle and bus services also pass the station. Taxi and drop off facilities are available and coach parking is also provided within the main station car park.
- 3.4.2 The station is reasonably well signed and offers a more visible frontage than Folkestone Central station. The main issue that has been identified in this case relates to mode integration, rather than visibility.
- 3.4.3 Whilst it is noted that bus services (77 / 78) pass the station on Shorncliffe Road, the stops are relatively remote from the station access and are approximately 190 metres, to the west.
- 3.4.4 In addition, whilst a separate pedestrian (and cycle) access is provided at the station (see **FIGURE 3.4**), it is considered that its appearance could be improved to attract more sustainable travel users to use the rail facilities which are available at the station.

**FIGURE 3.4 Folkestone West – Pedestrian / Cycle Access**



### Station Facilities

- 3.4.5 Folkestone West offers a waiting room, additional seating and toilet facilities at the station. It is noted however, that some areas of the station are not very attractive and improvements could potentially be made.
- 3.4.6 The underpass between platforms, for example, is illustrated below in **FIGURE 3.5**.

**FIGURE 3.5 Folkestone West – Platform Underpass**



- 3.4.7 The main issue that has been raised regarding Folkestone West however, in relation to station facilities, concerns the provision of parking and specifically, accommodation for private vehicles (cars).
- 3.4.8 Currently, 95 vehicle parking bays are provided at Folkestone West, 31 more than at Folkestone Central. The perception however, seems to be that whilst Folkestone Centre caters for a large number of rail travellers who access the station by a range of modes, Folkestone West by virtue of its less central location, more readily caters for car drivers and passengers.

3.4.9 The issue therefore, is that there could be an under-provision of car parking facilities at Folkestone West, meaning that:

- Car drivers may be parking elsewhere, nearby, potentially in less appropriate locations (such as on street, near to residential properties);
- The lack of car parking facilities may be suppressing demand to travel by rail, meaning that journeys are not being undertaken or that they are being undertaken by other modes (such as the car); or,
- A combination of the above.

## 3.5 Sandling

### Station Accessibility

3.5.1 Due to the location of Sandling rail station, only limited access is available to those who travel on foot and this is also the case for cyclists. It has been noted however, that cycle parking and bicycle lockers (see **FIGURE 3.6**) are provided and these have been observed to be in use on a number of occasions at the station. Bus access is also available (10a / 558) and bus stops are located within the station area itself.

**FIGURE 3.6 Sandling – Cycle Lockers**



3.5.2 It has therefore been considered that access to Sandling station is reasonable, given its location away from the main urban area of Hythe and the surrounding settlements. No particular issues have subsequently been identified through the consultation process, although it is considered that the station may benefit from improved bus connections.

### Station Facilities

3.5.3 In light of the above, Sandling station is predominantly accessed by car drivers who interchange onto rail services, for onward travel. Again however, no particular issues have been identified relating to the facilities which are currently provided.

## 3.6 Westenhanger

### Station Accessibility

- 3.6.1 Westenhanger is considered to be the least accessible of the four rail stations in Shepway as there are no bus services which pass within the vicinity of the station and walking only provides a realistic option for residents of Stone Street and a limited number of others in the local area.
- 3.6.2 Similarly, cycling is only considered as being an option for a limited number of people, given that there are no settlements of notable size within the immediate area surrounding the station.
- 3.6.3 For the use of the station to be increased therefore, access by sustainable modes such as those mentioned above needs to be considered in detail and options to enhance access to the station should be implemented, wherever possible.
- 3.6.4 It is recognised that events at Folkestone Racecourse are likely to intensify activities around the station and that opportunities exist to promote the use of the station, particularly for such events.

### Station Facilities

- 3.6.5 Given the location of the station, the station facilities which are available to patrons are not atypical. In terms of parking facilities however, it has been identified that there are no formal cycle parking spaces at the station (see **FIGURE 2.14**) and very limited car parking facilities.
- 3.6.6 Whilst it is noted that car parking charges do not currently apply, only 9 car parking spaces are currently provided at the station itself, whilst additional informal parking is currently utilised on street, adjacent to residential properties on Stone Street. An example of on street parking in the vicinity of Westenhanger station is provided in **FIGURE 3.7** below.

**FIGURE 3.7 Westenhanger – Informal Car Parking on Stone Street**



## 3.7 Other Rail Issues

- 3.7.1 As part of the consultation exercises which have been undertaken to inform the development of this Transport Strategy, two areas have been identified for consideration more generally, as opposed to focusing on the individual rail stations. These are discussed in turn, below:

### **The Role of High Speed 1 (HS1)**

- 3.7.2 Discussions relating to the consultation workshops have indicated a perceived increase in both rail use and parking demand at rail stations since the introduction of High Speed (HS1) rail services in the district, commencing in December 2009.

### **Park and Ride / Park and Rail**

- 3.7.3 The opportunities for Park and Ride and / or Park and Rail have also been discussed as part of the consultation workshops as well as with officers of both Shepway District Council and Kent County Council.
- 3.7.4 Park and Ride (not linked to rail services) is considered in more detail in the accompanying 'Parking' Strategy Document.
- 3.7.5 The issue of Park and Rail has been discussed in relation to Westenhanger, Folkestone West and 'Folkestone East' rail stations in the context of car parking facilities being provided to accommodate additional vehicles, thereby allowing a greater level of interchange to take place between car drivers and the rail network.
- 3.7.6 Furthermore, the option of a Parkway station has also been discussed. Notwithstanding this, the option for a Park and Rail facility in the district has not been considered in more detail as part of the preparation of this Transport Strategy, in its own right, although the options for providing appropriate parking facilities has (see **SECTION 4**).
- 3.7.7 It should be noted that as part of a prioritisation activity at both of the consultation workshops, Park and Ride / Park and Rail received no votes, on either occasion.

## 4 Transport Strategy

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This rail strategy has been developed within the context of the services which are currently provided within the Shepway District. It has considered the operation of the existing network and seeks to support the use of sustainable modes of transport, as a broader objective of the overall Transport Strategy.
- 4.1.2 Consideration has been given to both the existing situation and that associated with the potential Strategic Site allocations which may be implemented following the Core Strategy process. A summary of the potential measures that could be progressed through the implementation of the Transport Strategy are provided in this chapter.
- 4.1.3 As per the layout of this report thus far, measures will be considered for each station in turn and a separate section will be provided concerning the strategic site allocations.

### 4.2 Folkestone Central

- 4.2.1 The key issues which have been identified in relation to rail services at Folkestone Central, as summarised in **SECTION 3**, relate to the:
- Visibility of the station;
  - Integration of the station with local bus stops;
  - Integration with the town centre and bus station;
  - The bus stop facilities on Cheriton Road specifically, adjacent to the Co-op; and,
  - The quality of the facilities which are provided at the station.
- 4.2.2 During the preparation of this Transport Strategy, URS / Scott Wilson on behalf of Shepway District Council have held a number of meetings with relevant stakeholders and have also arranged two consultation workshops.
- 4.2.3 Following on from this, a rail meeting has been held with officers of Kent County Council and Shepway District Council and representatives from Network Rail, as the asset owner, and Southeastern Railways, as the operator. In addition, Stagecoach, the main bus operator in the district were also present.
- 4.2.4 The meeting, which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010, represented the initiation of the Shepway Station Partnership (SSP), following the establishment of the group earlier in the year. The discussions which took place at the meeting have therefore formed a key information source in the preparation of this document.
- 4.2.5 Moving beyond the identification of issues and focusing more on the measures which could potentially be introduced, it is noted that the SSP have already identified and in some cases implemented some schemes which seek to address problems which are currently occurring.

- 4.2.6 The key aim of the SSP is for the stations located within the partnership area (which includes all four of Shepway's stations) to be able to offer the maximum benefits of rail travel to the local communities through maximising the use of the stations, and minimising any associated implications on the surrounding areas.
- 4.2.7 Southeastern have therefore committed to a £400,000 investment programme at Folkestone Central station and the measures which have been identified are specifically targeted at addressing a number of the issues which have been identified herein. Taking each of the issues in turn therefore:

### **Visibility of the Station**

- 4.2.8 The need for the visibility of Folkestone Central in terms of its entrance from Cheriton Road and the immediate façade to be enhanced has been identified. Southeastern have confirmed that they are aware of this issue and that new signing will be provided at the station entrance to welcome travellers and announce the presence of the station.
- 4.2.9 It is therefore envisaged that a medium to large sized sign will be located immediately at the station entrance "Welcome to FOLKESTONE CENTRAL".

### **Integration of the Station with Local Bus Stops**

- 4.2.10 Southeastern have recently installed (7<sup>th</sup> September 2010) Bus Information Boards at Folkestone Central station which provide information regarding:
- The destinations available by bus travel;
  - The number of buses, per hour; and,
  - The location of the bus stops, in relation to the rail station.
- 4.2.11 The information which is now provided should provide a much clearer link between bus and rail travel at the station. It is considered that to support this strategy further however, upgrades to the bus stops in the vicinity of the station could be undertaken, to emphasise the importance of the area as a location of transport interchange, between modes.

### **Integration with the Town Centre and Bus Station**

- 4.2.12 It is understood that Southeastern have identified a specific implementation plan for improving the integration of Folkestone Central with the town centre and the bus station at Bouverie Place.
- 4.2.13 As part of the SSP however, it was noted that improved signage and 'wayfinding' was discussed as a measure which should be introduced at Folkestone Central. Walking and cycling route signs should therefore be provided between these locations, indicating the direction and distance.

### **Bus Stop Facilities on Cheriton Road**

- 4.2.14 It is noted that due to the highway layout in the vicinity of Folkestone Central, there is very limited scope to alter the bus routes which are provided and consolidate the bus stops currently located on Cheriton Road, Radnor Park Road and Shorncliffe Road.

4.2.15 Options to upgrade the bus stops have been identified above however, and such measures could include the provision of high quality bus shelters and bus and rail information. In specific relation to the bus stop on Cheriton Road it is noted that a bus boarder was previously provided at this location, but that this has since been removed.

4.2.16 In order to ensure that the use of the bus stop is appropriately available therefore, it is recommended that the parking restrictions in the vicinity of the stop are reviewed and if necessary, enforced, to ensure that the bus has constant access to the stop.

### Station Facilities

4.2.17 As Shepway's primary station, it has been observed that a number of the facilities at Folkestone Central could be of a higher quality. Southeastern are also aware of this and are committed to upgrading the station. As such, a number of measures have already been identified, including:

- The relocation of cycle lockers and stands off of the platforms to the front of the station to improve access for cyclists and enhance the visibility of these facilities, to other potential cyclists;
- The upgrading of the platform waiting room; and,
- The revision of the station ramp (see **FIGURE 3.3**) to improve the attractiveness and usability of the station layout.

### Summary – Folkestone Central

4.2.18 A number of measures have been identified relating to Folkestone Central station, some of which have been or are being implemented by Southeastern and some of which are proposed to be taken forward through the SSP. The Transport Strategy has also proposed the consideration of some further measures however, which could be taken forward through the SSP or in co-ordination with local developments. The associated measures and their current status is summarised below in **TABLE 4.1**.

**TABLE 4.1 Folkestone Central – Transport Strategy Measures**

Measure	Main Objective	Status
Station Entrance (Signing)	Increase visibility of station	Southeastern to implement
Bus Information Boards	Integrate rail and bus travel	Southeastern have implemented
Bus Stop Upgrades		Proposal
Signage and Wayfinding	Integration with town centre and bus station	Proposal
Review Cheriton Road bus stop	Ensure bus access is available to allow disabled passengers suitable boarding / alighting	Proposal
Upgrading of Station Facilities	Maximise attractiveness of station	Southeastern to implement

4.2.19 In addition to the above, discussions as part of the SSP have also identified that the former parcel office site at Folkestone Central is currently vacant and could potentially be redeveloped. As such, the provision of an appropriate, high quality land use on this site could significantly enhance the public realm at the station and emphasise the area as a key focal point for transport and mode interchange. The following options could therefore be considered:

- Retail Facilities – appropriate for use by local people as well as commuters;
- Café / Bar – appropriate for use by local people as well as commuters;
- Cycle Shop / Cycle Hire – available for use by local commuters (for equipment and servicing) as well as tourists and visitors, and locals; or,
- Shop Mobility – for use by tourists and visitors mainly, emphasising the opportunities to integrate the station with the town centre.

## 4.3 Folkestone West

4.3.1 The key issues which have been identified in relation to rail services at Folkestone West, as summarised in **SECTION 3**, relate to the:

- Location of bus stops;
- Pedestrian / Cycle access; and,
- Provision of car parking facilities.

4.3.2 Taking each of the issues in turn:

### Location of Bus Stops

4.3.3 Bus Information Boards have recently been introduced (7<sup>th</sup> September 2010) at Folkestone West, as at Folkestone Central, by Southeastern with a view to increasing the level of integration between rail and bus travel.

4.3.4 As part of the preparation of this Transport Strategy however, it has been noted that the existing bus stops located on Shorncliffe Road are located approximately 190 metres from the station and that the possible re-location of these stops, closer to the station, may facilitate improved connecting journeys between these two modes.

4.3.5 Discussions with the SSP group have identified that both Southeastern and Stagecoach, as the rail and bus operators respectively, would be keen to investigate this further.

### Pedestrian / Cycle Access

4.3.6 It is noted that the existing pedestrian / cycle link between Shorncliffe Road and the main station entrance at Folkestone West is not very attractive (see **FIGURE 3.4**). On site observations have however, indicated that there may be limited opportunities to enhance this link, given the requirement for security fencing to be provided and the presence of a number of trees near to the link.

- 4.3.7 It is nonetheless considered however, that should the bus stops on Shorncliffe Road be relocated closer to the station, that there may be an opportunity for the link to be closely connected with the bus stops and potentially integrated with a crossing facility or improved signing and lighting.
- 4.3.8 A review of these proposals will need to be undertaken however, as it is noted that the junction to the east of the pedestrian / cycle access between Shorncliffe Road and Beachborough Road has recently been upgraded. The provision of bus stops and crossing facilities will therefore need to be considered in relation to the signalised junction and KCC will need to review any associated proposals to ensure that the operation of their highway network is not compromised.

### Provision of Additional Car Parking Facilities

- 4.3.9 Throughout the preparation of this Transport Strategy it has been recognised that there is a perception in Shepway that additional car parking facilities are required at Folkestone West rail station.
- 4.3.10 On site observations have generally indicated that the car park is near to capacity (in terms of parking demand), although not necessarily fully utilised. Furthermore, off site parking in local streets does not seem to be a fundamental issue and it is recognised that SDC have recently implemented Controlled Parking Zones in the local area, to manage on street parking.
- 4.3.11 It is anticipated that the provision of additional car parking facilities may therefore cater for both existing rail users who cannot or do not currently park at the station on a regular basis as well as new rail users who would like to be able use the rail network by parking at the station but currently drive, as there is not enough capacity in the car park.
- 4.3.12 Based on this assumption, it is very difficult to quantify the level of suppressed demand which currently exists and therefore forecast the extent to which additional car parking should be provided. It is subsequently recommended that further investigations are undertaken to estimate the demand for car parking, so that an appropriate parking facility can be delivered.
- 4.3.13 Potentially, additional car parking could be introduced on an incremental basis to ensure that an over-provision is not created. Furthermore, it is important that any such measure is accompanied by investment in the station itself and the consideration of the other bus and pedestrian / cycle measures that have been discussed previously, to ensure that those who travel sustainably to the station at the moment do not change mode and use their cars instead.
- 4.3.14 In terms of providing the additional car parking itself, discussions have been held with KCC and SDC, as well as Network Rail, Southeastern and the British Rail Property Board. It is therefore understood that there are a number of parcels of land in the vicinity of Folkestone West station that could potentially be redeveloped and provided as additional car parking facilities.
- 4.3.15 A plan of the sites that could potentially be converted for use as additional car parking is shown at **FIGURE 4.1**, which indicates that a number of parcels could be available and that these vary in size and location. Further analysis regarding parking demand could therefore be used to inform the decision making process as to which site(s) may provide the best option.

## Summary – Folkestone West

- 4.3.16 A number of measures have been identified relating to Folkestone West station, some of which have been or are being implemented by Southeastern and some of which are proposed to be taken forward through the SSP. The Transport Strategy has also proposed the consideration of some further measures however, which could be taken forward through the SSP or in co-ordination with local developments. The associated measures and their current status is summarised below in **TABLE 4.2**.

**TABLE 4.2 Folkestone West – Transport Strategy Measures**

Measure	Main Objective	Status
Bus Information Boards	Integrate rail and bus travel	Southeastern have implemented
Relocate bus stops on Shorncliffe Road		Proposal
Enhance pedestrian / cycle link	Improve quality of access facilities	Proposal
Investigate providing additional car parking	Increase mode interchange and rail use	Proposal

- 4.3.17 In addition, it is understood that Southeastern are considering the option to provide additional cycle parking at Folkestone West. The Transport Strategy therefore supports these proposals, as they offer the potential to increase the number of rail passengers who travel to and from the station by bicycle.

## 4.4 Sandling

- 4.4.1 Only one particular issue has been identified in relation to rail services at Sandling, as summarised in **SECTION 3**, relating to the:

- Provision of bus services.

- 4.4.2 Options regarding this issue are discussed below:

### Provision of Bus Services

- 4.4.3 It is understood that the timetable of the 558 bus service which currently stops at Sandling station does not tie in with the train times and these two services could therefore be better integrated.
- 4.4.4 Discussions as part of the SSP have identified however, that KCC are aware of this issue and have agreed to revise the bus service times to achieve better mode integration. The revision of the bus service will be accompanied by associated marketing to ensure that users of both services are aware of the changes which will be made, their purpose and the associated benefits.
- 4.4.5 Other options to provide better integration between the rail and bus networks at Sandling include the provision of Bus Information Boards, as per Southeastern's investment programme at Folkestone Central and Folkestone West and the consideration of providing additional bus services, which could contribute to making Sandling station more accessible. It is noted however, that it may not be commercially viable to provide additional buses.

## Summary – Sandling

- 4.4.6 A number of measures have been identified relating to Sandling station, one of which will be implemented by KCC and some of which are proposed to be taken forward through the SSP or possibly in co-ordination with local developments. The associated measures and their current status is summarised below in **TABLE 4.3**.

**TABLE 4.3 Sandling – Transport Strategy Measures**

Measure	Main Objective	Status
Bus Schedule Revision	Integrate rail and bus travel	KCC to implement
Bus Information Boards		Southeastern to consider
Review Bus Service Provision		Proposal

## 4.5 Westenhanger

- 4.5.1 The key issues which have been identified in relation to rail services at Westenhanger, as summarised in **SECTION 3**, relate to:

- Station Accessibility;
- Provision of Cycle Parking facilities; and,
- Provision of Car Parking Facilities.

- 4.5.2 Taking each of the issues in turn:

### Station Accessibility

- 4.5.3 Westenhanger is arguably the least accessible of the four rail stations in Shepway but notwithstanding this, it still provides effective connections between the district and Dover, Ashford and London.
- 4.5.4 Opportunities to walk and cycle to and from the station have been considered to be relatively limited, as has travel by bus, given the location of the station. A key opportunity to promote the increased sustainable use of the station therefore exists by linking the station to the strategic site allocation at Folkestone Racecourse, which is located directly to the south west of Westenhanger, as well as those in the surrounding area.
- 4.5.5 This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but given that good rail services are available, benefits could potentially be derived for new and existing residents from the existing facilities.
- 4.5.6 For example, a worked example has been calculated considering the length of time it would take to travel from Westenhanger (by train) to Ashford, and then change onto HS1, as opposed to driving to Ashford. This information is summarised below in **TABLE 4.4**.

**TABLE 4.4 Westenhanger to London (St Pancras) – Journey Time Comparison, in Minutes**

Element of Journey	Rail & HS1	Car & HS1
Leave Westenhanger	0722	0722
Arrive at Ashford International	0731	0737 <sup>1</sup>
Leave Ashford International (on HS1)	0743	0813
Arrive at London St Pancras	0819	0848
<b>Total Journey Time (Minutes)</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>86</b>

<sup>1</sup>Internet based route planner indicates 20 minute drive from Westenhanger to Ashford International (this does not take account of morning congestion etc). 5 minutes have been added on to this to allow for parking and accessing the rail station at Ashford

- 4.5.7 It is noted that based on the assumptions presented above, it would be possible for the car driver to travel on the same HS1 service (leaving Ashford International at 0743), providing that their journey commenced at Westenhanger at or before 0715, approximately. In this case, the combined car / train journey time could potentially be reduced from 86 to 64 minutes, although this is still more than 10% longer than if the journey was undertaken wholly by train, from Westenhanger.
- 4.5.8 This also assumes that it is possible to drive between Westenhanger and Ashford International in 25 minutes, including time to park and walk into the station. In addition, it is also likely that the cost of driving would exceed the additional £4.00 single fare between Westenhanger and Ashford International, meaning that the train based journey is expected to be quicker and cheaper.
- 4.5.9 The conclusion therefore, is that there are good rail connections from Westenhanger, but that they may not be well known. Improved marketing of the facilities which are available therefore, coupled with improved parking facilities (discussed below), could therefore increase the attractiveness and use of the existing station.

### Provision of Cycle Parking Facilities

- 4.5.10 It is noted that there are currently no formal cycle parking facilities at Westenhanger station, despite observations confirming that there is some demand to travel to and from the station using this mode (an example of informal cycle parking is illustrated at the station in **FIGURE 2.14**).
- 4.5.11 The proposal therefore, is that cycle parking facilities are introduced. These should preferably be covered and in a prominent location. Given the relatively remote location of the station however, it is further suggested that cycle lockers are provided, as is the case at Sandling, rather than traditional Sheffield Stands. These more secure facilities should increase cyclists confidence that their bicycles will be safe, while they are away.

### Provision of Car Parking Facilities

- 4.5.12 There are very limited car parking facilities at Westenhanger station at the moment and it is recognised that once the car park (which is free to use) is full, rail passengers park their cars on the side on the road along Stone Street, in the vicinity of residential properties.

- 4.5.13 It is considered that through undertaking marketing of the rail services which are available at Westenhanger that it may be possible to increase the use of the station. However, to accommodate the additional demand it will be necessary to provide improved car parking facilities.
- 4.5.14 To ensure that this does not negatively impact on local residents a strategy approach is therefore proposed whereby parking controls are implemented on Stone Street, potentially by way of a residents parking scheme. This would allow residents to continue to park at their properties but would prevent patrons of the rail station from doing so.
- 4.5.15 This should therefore improve the local environment for residents and reduce the number of conflicts on Stone Street, thereby improving road safety.
- 4.5.16 In doing so however, it will be necessary to introduce improved formal car parking facilities at the station and investigations will therefore need to be undertaken regarding whether or not there is sufficient land available for such facilities to be provided. It is also noted that options for parking to be provided with or by the developer of the racecourse strategic site may be available and these should be considered (discussed below).
- 4.5.17 Through this process it is also recommended that parking charges are introduced at the station car park to ensure that additional parking facilities do not lead to a migration of rail users from other stations to Westenhanger, due to the perceived saving of parking charges. Parking charges currently apply at all of the four rail stations in the district, with the exception of Westenhanger.

### Summary – Westenhanger

- 4.5.18 A number of measures have been identified relating to Westenhanger station which are proposed to be taken forward through the SSP. The Transport Strategy has also proposed the consideration of some further measures however, which could be taken forward in co-ordination with local developments. The associated measures and their current status is summarised below in **TABLE 4.5**.

**TABLE 4.5 Westenhanger – Transport Strategy Measures**

Measure	Main Objective	Status
Marketing of rail services	Increase rail patronage at station	Proposal
Links to development		Proposal
Provide cycle parking	Increase mode interchange and rail use	Proposal
Increase car parking		Proposal

- 4.5.19 In relation to Westenhanger station, one further option has been identified relating to the intensified use of the station whereby considerable increases in the facilities currently available are provided, including car parking and a possible new access road between the station and the A20 to the east in the vicinity of the M20, at Junction 11.
- 4.5.20 The purpose in this case would be to seek to change the purpose of the station, fulfilling an out-of-town 'parkway' status potentially for those travelling south on the M20 towards Folkestone and those travelling north, commuting out of the district, towards Ashford and London.

- 4.5.21 It is likely that any such investment would need to be considerable and most likely, linked to other development in the area, and would require land which currently falls outside of the ownership of Network Rail and the local authority. Furthermore, discussions have included the proposal of re-locating the districts second HS1 stop from Folkestone West, to Westenhanger.
- 4.5.22 As discussed in **SECTION 3** however, the options to provide a 'Park and Rail' facility received no support as part of the consultation workshops which were held and it is considered that options to alter the HS1 system in the district could be to the detriment of the overall service which Shepway is currently benefiting from and is very proud to have.
- 4.5.23 This Transport Strategy does not therefore recommend that the role of Westenhanger is reviewed but that its use is promoted and increased where possible, potentially through links to local developments which SDC are considering through the Core Strategy site allocations.

## 4.6 Other Rail Issues

- 4.6.1 In preparing this Transport Strategy it has been identified that some options exist regarding the re-instatement or re-use of Folkestone East rail station and that the connection to the harbour could be re-opened. Furthermore, the provision of a ferry service between Folkestone and Boulogne has also been identified as a possible option.

### Folkestone East, the Harbour Line and Foot Ferry

- 4.6.2 In considering the relative merits of Folkestone West, Central and East rail stations it has been concluded that the east station (also known as Folkestone Junction) does not offer any significant benefits in terms of location or facilities over and above the two existing stations. This conclusion should be considered in relation to the extremely high cost that would be associated with re-opening this station, whilst closing and diverting all of the facilities and infrastructure associated with the other station(s).
- 4.6.3 Furthermore, through the SSP, Southeastern working with Network Rail and Stagecoach have committed to significant investment into the two Folkestone stations and the relative merits of diverting this towards Folkestone East are not therefore considered as being a good use of the available resources or of benefit to rail passengers.
- 4.6.4 In relation to the use of the harbour line connection and a possible ferry service, both of these options have been considered as offering benefits to the transport system in Shepway. Whilst these connections may be considered as being desirable and of supplementary benefit however, neither are considered as being requirements of the Transport Strategy.
- 4.6.5 This Transport Strategy therefore supports both the re-use of the harbour connection, potentially as a pedestrian and / or cycle link, and the re-introduction of a foot ferry service. If these schemes can be funded and operated in a viable way, they are likely to provide some transport and wider benefits to the district.
- 4.6.6 The focus of the Transport Strategy however, is on building on the existing links and sustainable measures which are already in place in the district which include ways of deriving maximum benefit from the high quality and effective bus and rail networks which are already in operation.

- 4.6.7 Where developments come forward in the district and in this case in the town centre and surrounding area, the Transport Strategy therefore urges any associated funding to be directed towards strong pedestrian and cycle links between the development sites specifically and the surrounding infrastructure (eg. town centre and bus and rail networks).
- 4.6.8 Through the Travel Plan process, it is recommended that developers are requested to provide bus and rail (potentially PLUS BUS) travel vouchers to all new residents / employees to promote the use of these modes as a priority as it is considered that such contributions will potentially have the greatest effect on travel patterns in the district.

### **Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RHDR)**

- 4.6.9 Following a similar theme to that discussed above, this Transport Strategy fully supports the role of the RHDR light railway in the district as it offers an important means of travel for tourists as well as school children, and local people.
- 4.6.10 It is noted that the Nickolls Quarry strategic site which has already been granted planning consent has made a contribution towards the provision of station facilities related to the RHDR, given the sites location.
- 4.6.11 Where there are other opportunities to integrate the RHDR into the transport network(s) in the district, the Transport Strategy recommends that these are investigated in more detail. Notwithstanding this however, the focus is recommended to again be on the mainline rail network and bus connections in the first instance, as these will provide the greatest opportunities to promote wider sustainable travel and reduce the need for private vehicular trips.

## **4.7 Strategic Site Allocations**

- 4.7.1 As discussed, this Rail Strategy note as per the Transport Strategy more generally, has considered existing issues as well as the context for future development plans in Shepway. SDC's Core Strategy has identified eight strategic development sites, although one of these has already been granted planning permission. The remaining seven are:
- Folkestone Seafront;
  - Risborough & Napier Barracks;
  - New Romney;
  - Hawkinge;
  - Folkestone Racecourse;
  - Lympne Airfield; and
  - Sellindge.
- 4.7.2 It is recognised that each of these new developments, assuming that they are delivered, will create additional travel demand in the district, some of which will be for rail travel. To estimate the predicted rail demand the nationally adopted TEMPRO database was interrogated in order to establish trip rates for residential households in terms of rail trips, which is based on existing information and predicted trends. Further information regarding the methodology associated with these calculations is presented elsewhere in this Transport Strategy, in connection with the establishment of the Spreadsheet Model.

- 4.7.3 It has only been possible to carry out this exercise and establish rail user trip rates for the residential aspects of the strategic development sites, as the TEMPRO database which has been analysed for these investigations focuses on Home-Based trips.
- 4.7.4 The predicted rail demand for each of the strategic development sites which may be developed in the future in the District for the AM, PM and Average Weekday scenarios is presented below in **TABLE 4.6**, based on the development scenarios currently envisaged for the sites, which is being considered through the Core Strategy.

**TABLE 4.6 Additional Rail Passenger Demand – AM, PM and Average Weekday**

Development	AM Peak (0800-0900)	PM Peak (1700-1800)	Weekday (0700-1900)
New Romney (400 dwellings)	4	4	44
Folkestone Seafront (1000 dwellings)	11	11	110
Risborough & Napier Barracks (900 dwellings)	10	10	99
Hawkinge (300 dwellings)	3	3	33
Folkestone Racecourse (400 dwellings)	4	4	44
Lympne Airfield (400 dwellings)	4	4	44
Sellindge (300 dwellings)	3	3	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>407</b>

- 4.7.5 As the table above shows, it is predicted that over the course of an Average Weekday there will be an additional demand of approximately 407 rail passenger trips associated with the residential elements of the seven identified strategic development sites.
- 4.7.6 Due to the disparate locations of the strategic sites however, the demand for rail travel arising from the new developments needs to be considered to some extent, on a site-by-site basis, given that sites within or near towns where stations are provided may be more likely to generate a higher number of rail trips, where as more remote journeys may generate fewer.
- 4.7.7 Further consideration of the strategic sites has therefore been afforded according to their location and this is summarised below:

### Strategic Sites – Folkestone

- 4.7.8 The 'Folkestone Seafront' and 'Risborough & Napier Barracks' sites are the largest of the developments being promoted through the Core Strategy. Both are located within Folkestone and therefore have the greatest potential to generate trips which may take place or be linked to the rail services provided at both Folkestone Central and Folkestone West. The TEMPRO analysis indicates that more than 200 additional rail trips could be generated daily, by the two developments.
- 4.7.9 It is therefore recommended that both of these sites seek to maximise their connectivity with the local walking, cycling and bus networks to facilitate their integration with the rail network and therefore, the uptake of rail travel. As discussed, it is recommended that through the site Travel Plans, both rail and bus vouchers (potentially in the form of PLUS BUS tickets) are provided to introduce new residents to the services which are available.

- 4.7.10 Both of these sites could also potentially contribute towards the investment programme which Southeastern have initiated through the Shepway Station Partnership.

### **Strategic Sites – New Romney**

- 4.7.11 The New Romney strategic site is located the furthest from the four rail stations located within the district. It is also considerably smaller than the two development sites in Folkestone and is subsequently only expected to generate approximately 40 rail trips, per day.
- 4.7.12 As it will not realistically be possible for residents to walk or cycle between the site and the rail station(s) it is considered that the key measure in this case will be to promote bus travel in the vicinity of the site and connections to the rail stations, where possible.
- 4.7.13 It is recognised however, that some rail passengers will be likely to travel by car to and from the rail stations and it will be important for information to be provided regarding which stations are closest to the site and the services which are available from that location, to ensure that car trips and journey lengths are minimised, where possible. As part of the detailed Transport Assessment which will be prepared for the site, it is recommended that the extent to which rail trips will be made using Ashford, rather than Shepway based rail stations, is considered in more detail.
- 4.7.14 It is noted that the RHDR serves this area as well and so some trips may be able to be made using this network, potentially by school children.

### **Strategic Sites – Hawkinge**

- 4.7.15 The Hawkinge site is also located outside of the realistic range to walk and cycle to and from a rail station in the district. The site is of a similar size to New Romney and is therefore predicted to generate approximately 35 rail trips, per day.
- 4.7.16 As above, it is recommended that the key measure will be to promote bus travel in the vicinity of the site and connections to the rail stations, where possible.
- 4.7.17 It is again recognised that some rail passengers will be likely to travel by car to and from the rail stations and it will be important for information to be provided regarding which stations are closest to the site and the services which are available from that location, to ensure that car trips and journey lengths are minimised, where possible. As part of the detailed Transport Assessment which will be prepared for the site, it is again recommended that the extent to which rail trips will be made using Ashford, rather than Shepway based rail stations, is considered in more detail.

### **Strategic Sites – Strategic Triangle**

- 4.7.18 The 'Strategic Triangle' relates to the triangle of strategic sites which are located at Folkestone Racecourse, the Former Lympne Airfield and Sellindge, respectively.
- 4.7.19 The Folkestone Racecourse site in particular will be located in close proximity to Westenhanger rail station and it is considered at this stage of the master planning process, that the majority of the development is likely to be located within walking distance of the station.
- 4.7.20 In land area, the racecourse site is also the largest of the three triangle sites and whilst 400 residential dwellings have currently been identified as part of the Core Strategy, it may be possible for more dwellings to be provided. Based on the current forecasts however, approximately 40 daily rail trips are expected to be generated by the development.

- 4.7.21 Both of the Lympe and Sellindge sites are located in close proximity as well, and these both also therefore have the potential to generate rail trips which could access the rail network at Westenhanger. As such, the three combined sites are expected to generate in excess of 110 rail trips, on a daily basis.
- 4.7.22 The racecourse site is considered as possessing the greatest opportunity to promote rail travel through its development, by encouraging its residents (and their visitors) to travel to and from the site, by train. There are options too, for the Lympe and Sellindge sites to also promote this mode but further measures are likely to be required to support this, including:
- The provision of connecting facilities (potentially by bus) between the rail station and the development sites / focal areas within Lympe and Sellindge;
  - The provision of high quality cycle links between the sites / areas and the station; or,
  - Contributing towards the provision of additional parking facilities at the station.
- 4.7.23 Through the provision of additional and improved car (and cycle) parking facilities at Westenhanger, it is considered that the use of rail travel by the developments at Lympe and Sellindge could be further promoted. Furthermore, additional parking capacity could also attract others within the area onto the rail network at Westenhanger, therefore providing benefits to both existing and future residents of the district.
- 4.7.24 The possible integration of the racecourse development in particular with the station at Westenhanger should therefore be considered in detail for the benefit of the development itself, possible other developments in the area, the existing community and residents of Stone Street. Through the careful design of the development it may be possible to revise the configuration and / or use of Stone Street to the benefit of local residents.

## 4.8 Summary

- 4.8.1 This rail strategy has considered the existing issues which have been identified in the district of Shepway, including those that have been raised through the consultation workshops. As such, a number of key measures have been identified within the context of the following objectives, established as part of the aforementioned workshops:

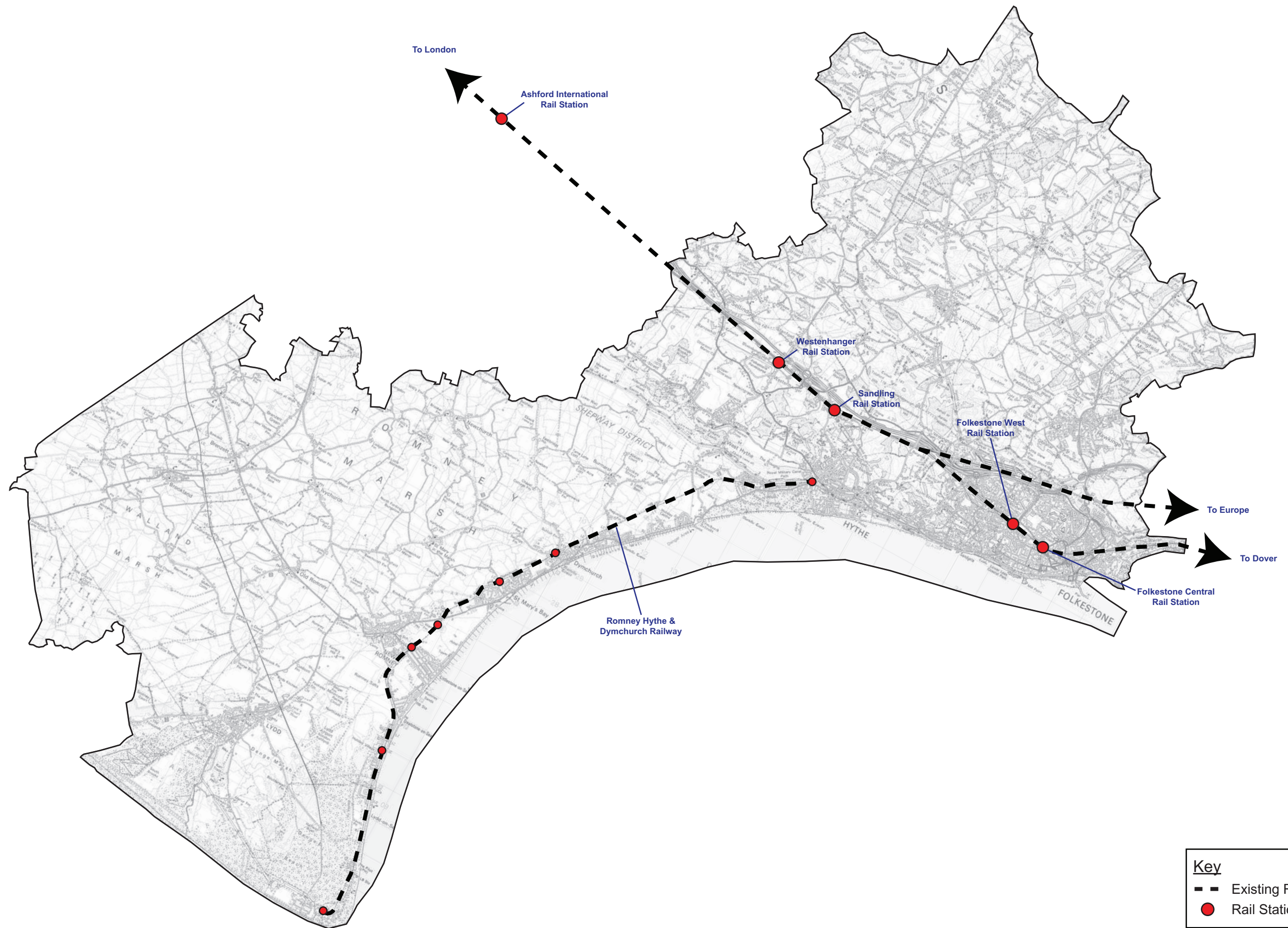
**Over-arching Objective: To provide better access to and integration with the rail stations:**

- **R1** Promote integration of rail stations
  - **R2** Promote rail station Travel Plans
  - **R3** Build on accessibility provided through HS1
  - **R4** Consider the role of the RHD line
- 4.8.2 Key measures have been identified and presented in this Rail Strategy document relating to each of the four stations (refer to **SUMMARY TABLES 4.1 – 4.3**, and **TABLE 4.5**) as well as the strategic developments.

- 4.8.3 As such, it is considered that there are two fundamental delivery mechanisms which can be progressed in relation to the rail strategy; namely, through the Shepway Station Partnership (SSP) and acquisition of developer contributions, in connection with the strategic site allocations and any other potential schemes that come forward during the life of the Core Strategy.
- 4.8.4 In light of this, the main measures which have been identified herein have been summarised within the context of the SSP timeframes which have been discussed with Southeastern and Network Rail. These are summarised below in **TABLE 4.7**.

**TABLE 4.7 Rail Measure Delivery**

Short Term Measures	→	Medium Term Measures	→	Long Term Measures
Signage (between the stations and local facilities including bus stops)		Measures to increase Mode Integration (such as bus stop upgrades)		Route Utilisation Strategy (for Southeastern and Network Rail to maximise rail travel)
Wayfinding (between the stations and local attractions, including the town centre(s))		Facility Upgrades at the stations themselves (such as improved waiting facilities)		Development of Station Partnership Guidance Protocol, for onward implementation



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Key	
	Existing Rail Line
	Rail Station

Rail Networks within Shepway



Figure 2.2

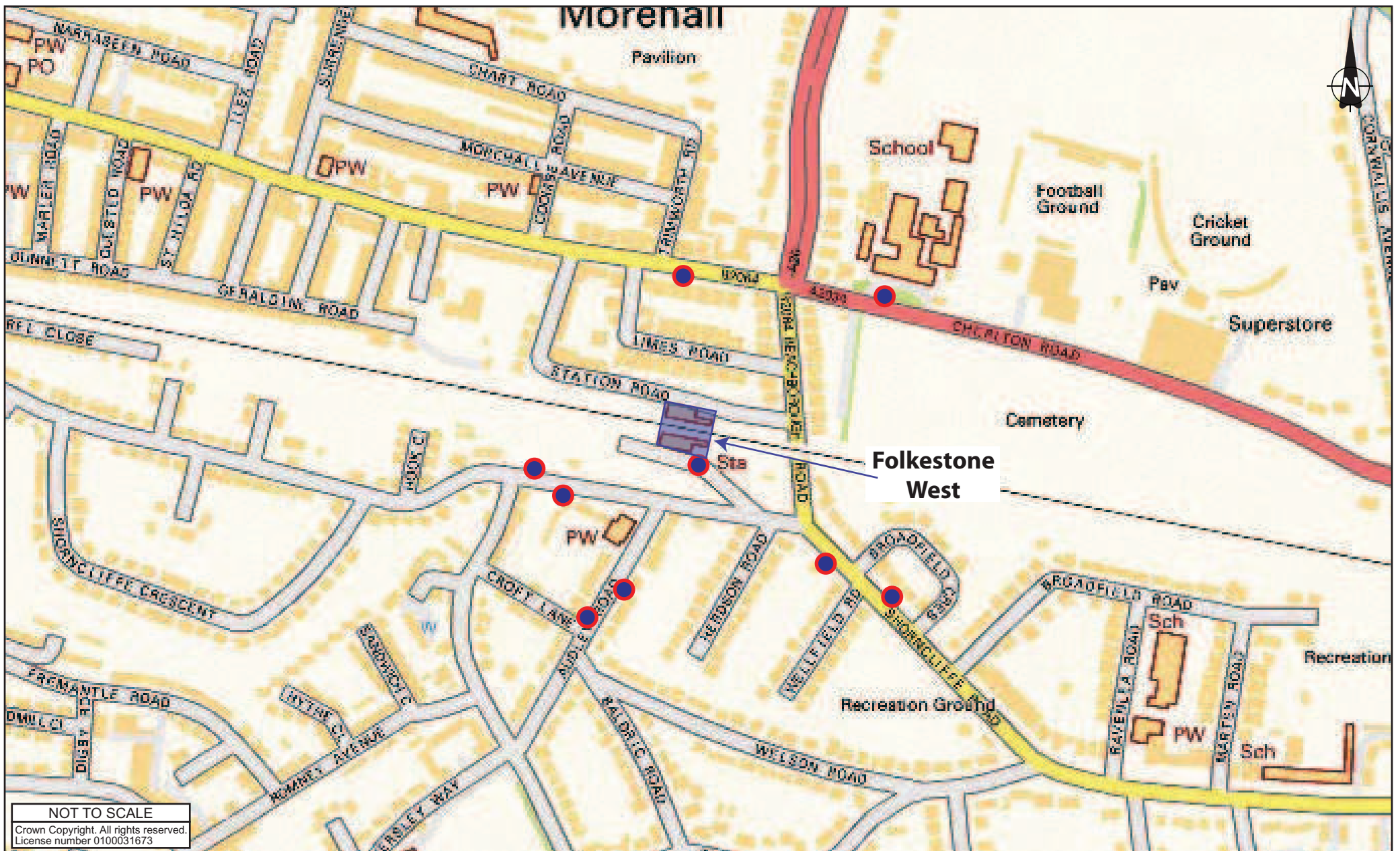




Folkestone Central Rail Station  
 Bus Stop Locations



Figure 2.5



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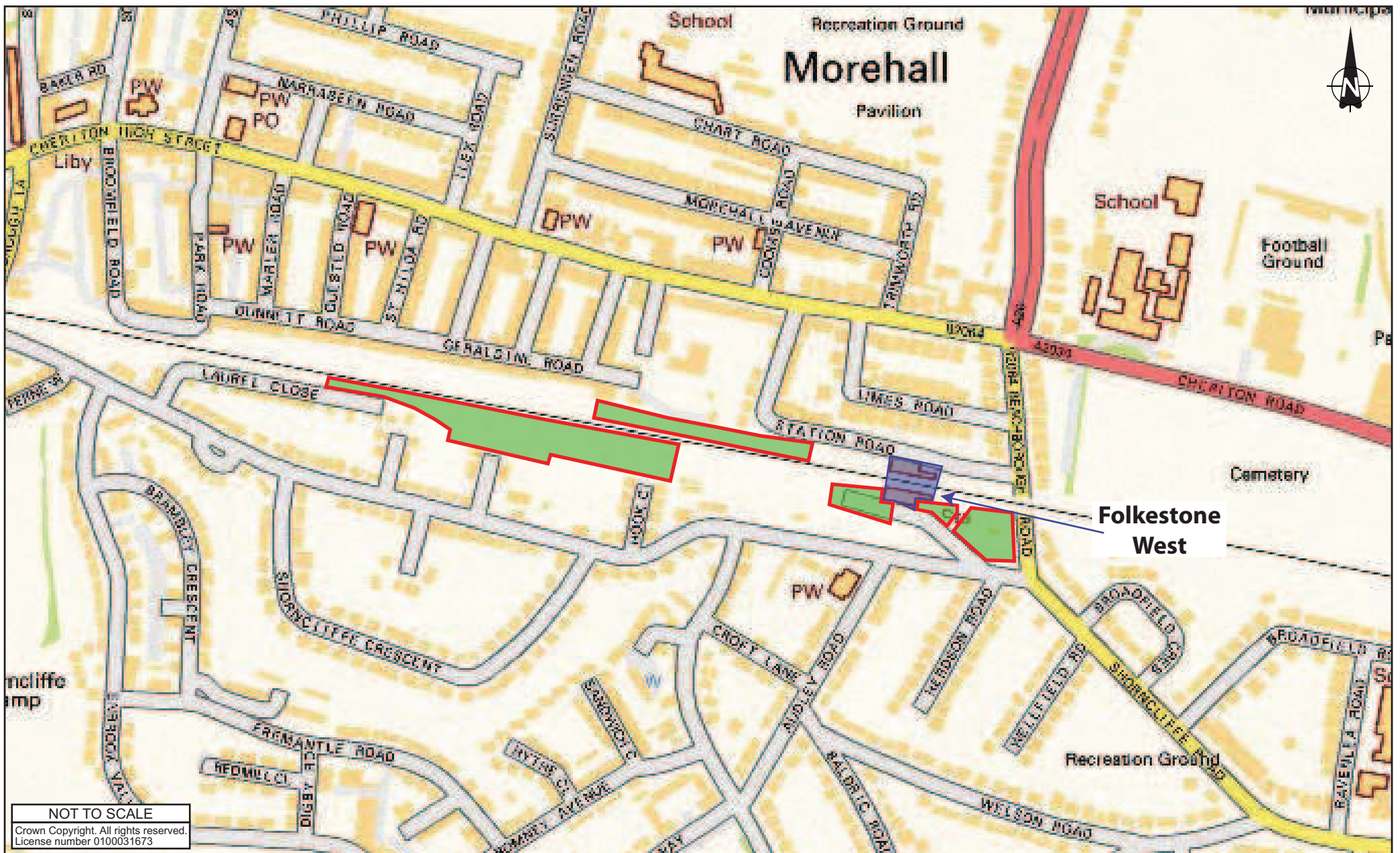
Folkestone West Rail Station  
 Bus Stop Locations



Figure 2.8



Sandling Rail Station  
Bus Stop Locations



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Folkestone West Rail Station  
 Potential Parking Sites



Figure 4.1