Improving Access to Tonbridge Station

Public Consultation on the revised design

Consultation period: 16 January to 12 February 2018

kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation

NetworkRail

southeastern.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Kent County Council
In late 2016 Kent County Council (KCC) carried out a public consultation on proposals to improve the area outside Tonbridge Station. The responses from this consultation and feedback from stakeholders has been used revise the design.

Tonbridge Station is the busiest station in Kent in terms of footfall, with over 4.4 million customers expected to have used the station in 2016/17.

The ticket office itself has been improved in recent years but the area directly outside the main entrance, which is used by many school children, commuters and leisure users on a daily basis, is no longer fit for purpose. At peak times, the area does not have the capacity to serve the large numbers of people using the space.

Working in liaison with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC), Network Rail and Southeastern Railway, KCC is aiming to improve the space available for customers at the station, provide more room for pedestrian movements, encourage further take up of sustainable transport and to link the design to the recently improved High Street. The land outside the station is owned by Network Rail and the rest is public highway, maintained by KCC.

KCC is using funds secured from the Local Growth Fund of £500,000 allocated by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and aims to begin construction in 2018.

With such a well-used space, shared by many different users, it is vital the design is the best it can be. Therefore KCC, along with its partners, are carrying out a second consultation to provide an update on the proposed design and provide the opportunity for interested parties to feedback once again.

The first consultation identified some areas of the design that could be better, including the need to improve traffic flow. The revised design seeks to address these areas.

Through this consultation we are seeking views on the revisions to the proposal as well as comments on all elements of the design. This will enable us to create a detailed design that meets the needs of local residents, businesses and visitors to the area.
What Are We Proposing?

These plans propose no changes to the station entrance on Barden Road or the taxi rank on Waterloo Road.

Please view page 3 onwards to see further details on the plan.
Increase pedestrian space directly outside main station entrance

The proposal is to create a large and welcoming pedestrian area giving greater space to the station users and pedestrians passing through. It would provide tourist information signage, new surfacing and give the café customers more room while providing a meeting place fit for the numbers of people accessing the station.

With limited space directly outside the main station entrance there isn’t room to accommodate a wider pedestrian space, buses and the drop off bays. The consultation feedback in 2016 showed us there was concern that limiting the bus stops in this part of town to the three proposed stops near Lidl may cause a pinch point and therefore increase congestion backing up to the Pembury Road.

As a result of this, we are proposing to remove the six short stay drop off bays from outside the front of the station, moving the bus stop further away from the main entrance creating a bus stop that alights directly onto the new forecourt, which will be particularly useful for people with impaired mobility.

The improved surface materials, including new paving, in this area would visually link the station with the improvement works undertaken on the High Street.

A new drop off zone will be created in Priory Road and new signage will be installed directing users to the existing Barden Road short stay drop off bays at the back of the station.

Current layout - The improved area outside the station would provide a more welcoming environment for visitors to Tonbridge
Create new short stay drop off bays in Priory Road

We are proposing to create three new short stay drop off bays in Priory Road to replace the spaces being removed from outside the front of the station. These bays are in addition to those already available outside the Barden Road entrance to the station.

This area is already used by some for this purpose and there is more road space available to accommodate drop off and pick up. The new crossing across Quarry Hill Road will allow easier access directly to the front of the station.

Priory Road is currently used by some for short stay drop off and pick up purposes.
Create a new pedestrian crossing from the station to the east side of Quarry Hill Road

The revised proposal is to create a new puffin crossing directly from the station to the East Side of Quarry Hill Road. This proposal will be of greatest benefit at peak times when large numbers of school children cross the roads – often travelling along the shortest distance possible.

In recognition of this, the proposal is to create a three metre wide, crossing for pedestrians to use while the traffic is held safely back on traffic lights in all directions.

Feedback from the consultation in 2016 showed that there was some concern that the additional crossings would slow down vehicle movements and cause congestion. To ensure that any disruption to traffic flow is minimised, the 45 degree crossing has now been designed at 90 degrees, thereby reducing the distance to cross and allowing us to design in shorter crossing times which will mean that traffic is stopped for shorter periods of time.

A Puffin crossing would be used. Puffin crossings use sensors to detect when pedestrians are waiting to cross the road and alter the red and green light timings accordingly.

Traffic does not always flow effectively and pedestrians undertake a series of crossings to reach the station.
Signalised Crossings

Install traffic controls at the Quarry Hill Road / Waterloo Road junction

We are proposing to install traffic lights at the junction of Waterloo Road with Quarry Hill Road. This would allow pedestrians safe movement, particularly at peak times such as before and after school. The lights would be controlled to allow for optimal pedestrian and vehicle flow within the space and would be responsive to changing traffic conditions throughout the day.

The result of this improvement would be the removal of the right turn into Priory Road. This is necessary otherwise vehicles attempting to turn right in to Priory Road would block the traffic on Quarry Hill Road causing congestion. It also enables us to improve the central island on Priory Road to aid pedestrian crossing movements.

The traffic survey of the junction showed on average there were 18 right turns an hour into Priory Road in the morning peak, compared to hundreds of movements in both directions along Quarry Hill Road.

Traffic signals would help pedestrians to cross safely.

To aid traffic flow on Quarry Hill Road, this junction will be altered to ‘left in, left out’ traffic movements.
West Side of Quarry Hill Road Bus Stop

Extend and improve the existing bus stop on West Side of Quarry Hill Road (outside Lidl)

The proposal to create a longer bus stop outside Lidl with space for three buses to stop at a time has not been altered since the last consultation. The pavement would be widened to create a larger pedestrian waiting area, less cluttered by street furniture, by using some of the existing road space for the bus stops.

The pavement is narrow and pedestrians struggle to get past waiting bus passengers at peak times.
Quarry Hill Parade Bus Stop

Extend and improve the existing bus stop on East Side of Quarry Hill Road (outside Quarry Hill Parade)

We are proposing to use some of the road space to create a longer bus stop on the east side of Quarry Hill Road for bus users travelling south. This would increase the space for buses allowing three buses to stop at a time which should aid the flow of traffic travelling south. This proposal is unchanged from the last consultation.

There is room to increase the length of the bus stop to accommodate an extra bus.
How To Get Involved

Have your say

Your feedback is essential to help us shape the final detailed design. Whether you support the proposals or have concerns, we want to hear your views.

The consultation runs from Tuesday 16 January to Monday 12 February 2018.

You can provide your views by completing the questionnaire which is available:

- Online at kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation
- At the consultation events
- From Tonbridge Gateway (Castle Street - adjacent to Tonbridge Castle)
- By emailing tonbridgestation@kent.gov.uk for a paper copy
- Alternatively take part in our Online Forum, which is also available via our website.

We have prepared an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which is available to view online at kent.gov.uk/tonbridgestation or on request.

Consultation Events

We have organised two consultation events where members of the team will be available to answer your questions. These events are being held in the Council Chamber at Tonbridge Castle on the following days:

- Saturday 27 January       11am – 2pm
- Thursday 8 February       3pm – 7pm

If you have any queries regarding the proposals or the consultation please contact us by email at tonbridgestation@kent.gov.uk

Next Steps

The consultation responses will be used to finalise the detailed design and this will be made public in anticipation of start of works in the Summer 2018.

A report, summarising the results of the consultation will be made public in Spring 2018. The Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board (JTB), which is made up of elected members from TMBC and KCC, will then make a recommendation on the proposals to KCC’s Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste. The Cabinet Member will then make a final decision on the scheme.

Alternative Formats

If you require any of the consultation documents in an alternative format or language please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 421553 (text relay service number 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.
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