

Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study

Stage 1 Consultation Summary Report

18 March 2021

AW2EC-WP2-RPT-0050



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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.1. The Crossrail to Ebbsfleet (C2E) Partnership was formed in 2016 as an informal group of authorities to promote an extension of the Elizabeth Line beyond its current planned terminus at Abbey Wood towards Ebbsfleet.
- 1.1.2. The proposals by the Crossrail to Ebbsfleet (C2E) Partnership would improve public transport journey times and provide faster connections into London and to other parts of Kent. Improvements to the transport network in these boroughs would also aim to increase the attractiveness of public transport, whilst supporting plans for investment and further development of new homes, jobs and leisure facilities; as well as reduce the need for trips by car.
- 1.1.3. Following engagement with the C2E Partnership in 2018, the Thames Estuary Growth Commission recommended that Government allocate funding to explore the feasibility of extending the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet.
- 1.1.4. In its response to the Thames Estuary Growth Commission recommendation, Government announced it would support the C2E Partnership to develop options to enhance transport services in this area, to facilitate new housing and economic growth. The Partnership agreed that the scope of this work should include consideration of a wider set of options beyond those to extend the Elizabeth Line.
- 1.1.5. A consultation for the proposed options to improve the transport network in the study area ran for 5 weeks from Tuesday 26th January to Wednesday 03rd March 2021.
- 1.1.6. A consultation webpage was setup for stakeholders to view the proposals and provide formal feedback through the online response form (<http://abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com>).
- 1.1.7. No public consultation events were able to take place for this consultation, due to the national lockdown restrictions imposed to limit the spread of Covid-19.
- 1.1.8. A total of 1014 responses were received through the online response forms, with a further 7 responses received by email.
- 1.1.9. Among the 1014 online responses received:
 - Most respondents were in support of the improvements to transport links within the designated study area. Of the 1014 responses received, 98% (989) of respondents indicated their support. With only 2% (21) of respondents stating they believe there is no need for transport links in the study area to be improved.
 - An extension of the Elizabeth Line (served by Crossrail) from Abbey Wood to Northfleet/Ebbsfleet received the most support from respondents, with 95% (960) respondents stating their support for this option. The development of a Bus Rapid Transit scheme between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet received the least support from respondents, with only 24% (242) of respondents supporting the option.
- 1.1.10. Key themes to emerge from the transport challenges faced currently by respondents were:
 - Trains are too slow/ take too long to where I want to get to
 - Trains are too crowded at peak times
 - Train tickets are too expensive
 - I have to change buses/ trains too many times to get to where I need to be
 - Buses are too unreliable

- 1.1.11. Key themes to emerge from most important factors to be considered when deciding on the best solutions:
- Being able to travel into other parts of London
 - Frequency of service
 - Direct services
 - Having more choices in the way I travel
 - Improving transport to cater for new housing and developments
- 1.1.12. The consultation responses have been analysed and used to inform an appraisal of potential options (at TAG Stage 1) and inform decisions about which options to progress for further development and appraisal (at TAG Stage 2). A further round of consultation on these short-listed options will be launched in the summer of 2021 once more work has been completed on their feasibility, costs, and benefits.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1. This public consultation report has been prepared by Atkins-Jacobs on behalf of the C2E Partnership to support the study into potential transport improvements between London and North Kent. This report summarises results of the recent public consultation that has taken place for the Study into Proposed Transport Enhancement Options, along the route of the suggested 16km extension between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet.
- 2.1.2. Following engagement with the C2E Partnership in 2018, the Thames Estuary Growth Commission recommended that Government allocate funding to explore the feasibility of extending the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet.
- 2.1.3. In its response to the Thames Estuary Growth Commission recommendation, Government announced it would support the C2E Partnership to develop options to enhance transport services in this area, in order to facilitate new housing and economic growth. The Partnership agreed that the scope of this work should include consideration of a wider set of options beyond those to extend the Elizabeth Line.
- 2.1.4. The C2E Partnership recently completed the first of two public consultations that will be undertaken in 2021. The public consultation period lasted for five weeks and was completed by 3rd March 2021. The feedback received from the consultation has been used to inform decisions about options to progress to the next stage of the study. Additionally, the results gathered will be used to help support the C2E Partnership business case to be submitted to Government in Autumn 2021.

2.2. Project Background

- 2.2.1. In summer 2020, a longlist of potential options to improve the transport network in the study area was drawn up. This longlist was subject to high level assessment and sifted down to eight broad options for further consideration.
- 2.2.2. The eight options were then subject to further assessment in autumn 2020. At this point, a potential Docklands Light Railway extension to Dartford and an Elizabeth Line extension on fully segregated tracks to Ebbsfleet were both discounted on the basis that they would not be affordable or represent good value for money. Minor improvements to National Rail services east of Dartford were also discounted on the basis that this would not provide an increase in the level of public transport service the area needs to support new housing and employment growth. The autumn 2020 assessment stage is documented in a supporting information pack, made available to the public via the consultation website¹ ([link](#)).
- 2.2.3. The five short-listed options selected for further development and appraisal at the conclusion of the Autumn 2020 stage formed the focus of this first stage of public consultation (see section 2.3).
- 2.2.4. At present there are some improvements to the transport network in the area which are expected to be implemented in the near future. Whilst these improvements will deliver more local benefits, they are not expected to provide significant connectivity and homes and jobs growth benefits more widely throughout the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet corridor. These already planned improvements are outlined as follows:

Rail Improvements

- 2.2.5. The National Rail timetable that was introduced in December 2019, providing train services between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet/Northfleet, is assumed to remain in place in future.

¹ <https://abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com/CMS/uploadpdfs/1611671194.pdf>

- 2.2.6. The Elizabeth Line is expected to open in 2022, introducing up to 12 trains per hour between central London and Abbey Wood station at peak times. There are also proposed improvements under the next franchise agreement for South Eastern Rail services on the North Kent Line, such as the introduction of longer trains and new rolling stock with walk-through carriages, which would provide an uplift in passenger capacity.

Bus/ Bus Rapid Transit

- 2.2.7. Conventional local bus services consist of services operated as part of the Transport for London network in Bexley, and in Dartford and Gravesend services operated by Arriva Kent Thameside. Services crossing the Bexley /Dartford boundary are limited to three routes providing access for London residents to Dartford town centre, Darent Valley Hospital and Bluewater Shopping Centre.
- 2.2.8. Currently Fastrack operates between Dartford and Gravesend. Fastrack uses a mixture of dedicated busways and operation on the local road network, supported by bus lanes and other bus priority measures. It complements existing bus and rail services by providing high frequency Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services between major residential areas, employment sites, Bluewater Shopping Centre, Darent Valley Hospital and Dartford and Gravesend town centres.
- 2.2.9. Kent County Council plans to expand the existing Fastrack services between Dartford and Gravesend in the near future to provide high quality public transport services to key developments at Springhead Park, Whitecliffe / Eastern Quarry and Northfleet Embankment.
- 2.2.10. The Fastrack bus network in Kent is expected to be improved over the next two years as follows:
- Route A is due to be extended from Bluewater to Gravesend through development sites at Eastern Quarry and Northfleet Embankment
 - Route B is due to be diverted via development sites in Springhead
- 2.2.11. Fastrack buses are also due to be converted from the existing diesel engines to electric operation, bringing further environmental benefits.
- 2.2.12. When assessing the options for further transport connectivity improvements the benefits and impacts of the proposed options will be assessed based on the assumption that these planned/committed improvements will be fully implemented.

2.3. Developing Options

- 2.3.1. Five options were presented as part of this public consultation:
- Three options involving different ways of extending the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood to Dartford and/or Northfleet/ Ebbsfleet.
 - One option to improve National Rail services (with no change to the Elizabeth Line); and
 - One option to provide a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service with no changes to rail services.

Elizabeth Line Extension

Figure 2-1 - Elizabeth Line Extension – Option 1

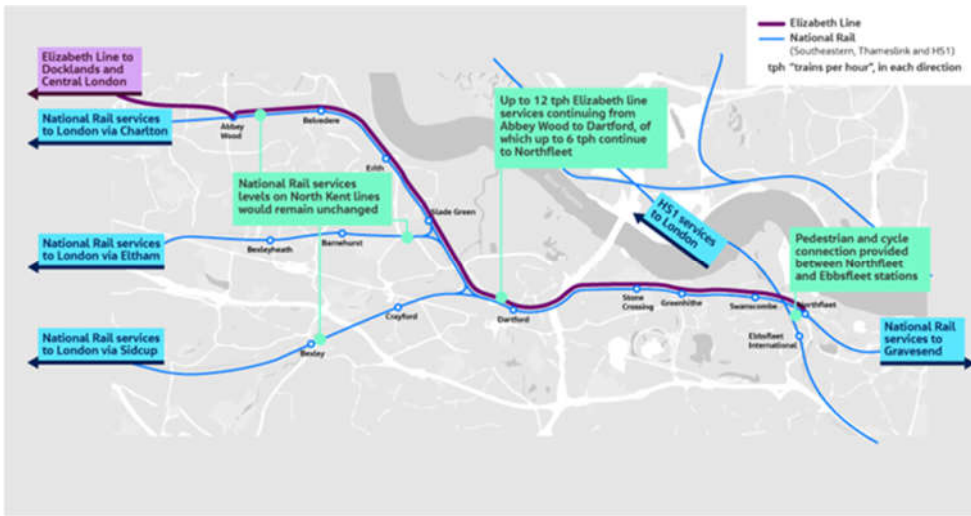


Figure 2-2 - Elizabeth Line Extension – Option 2

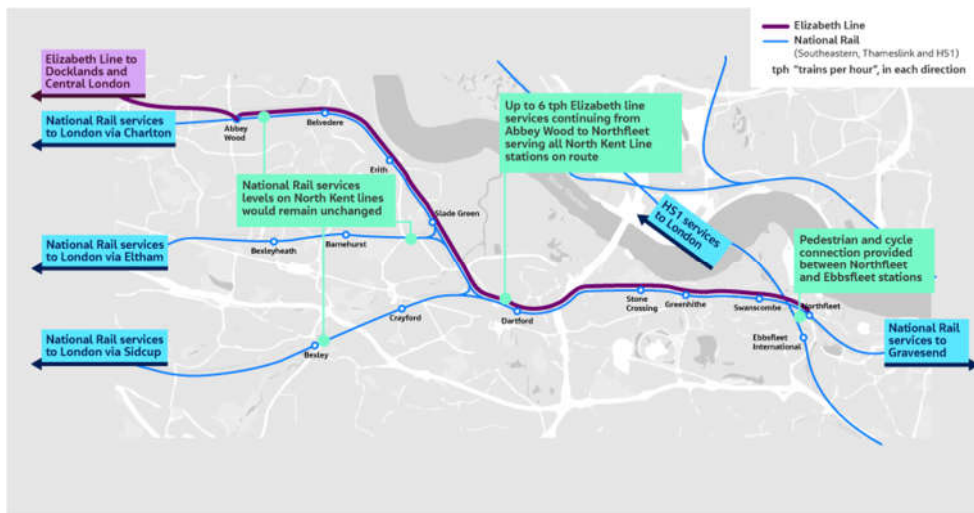
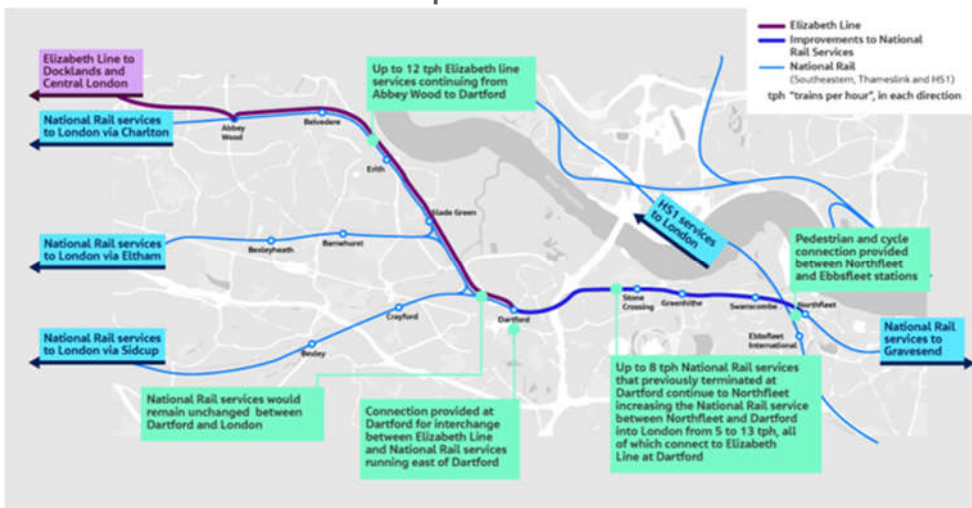


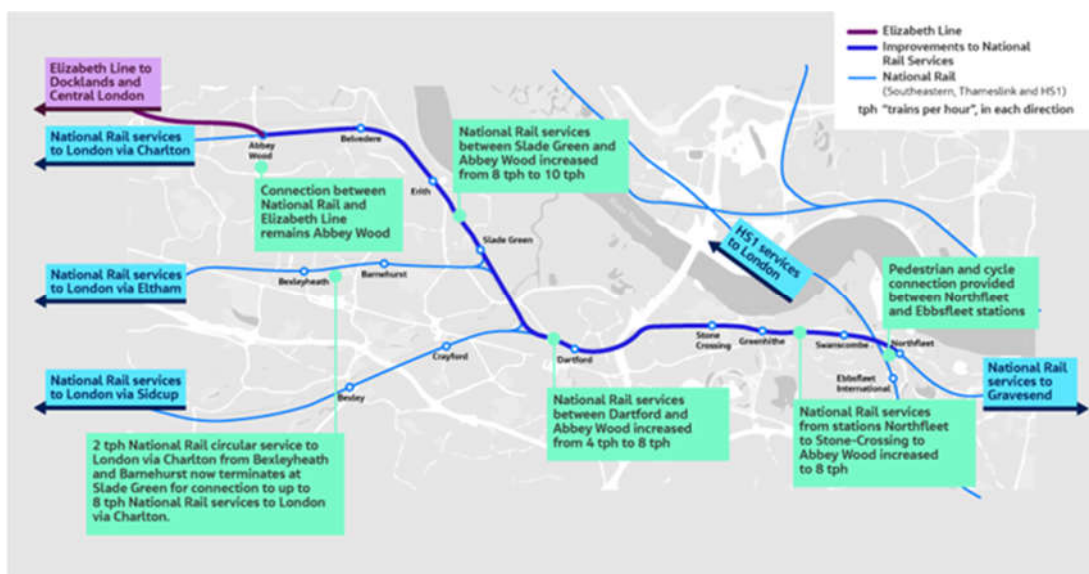
Figure 2-3 - Elizabeth Line Extension – Option 3



- 2.3.2. An extension of the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood would provide direct rail services into Canary Wharf, Central London and Heathrow Airport from the local area. These services would serve all stations east of Abbey Wood.
- 2.3.3. One option is to operate new Elizabeth Line services to Dartford, with improvements to Southeastern National Rail services between Dartford and Northfleet. Alternatively, there are two options where Elizabeth Line services could operate to Northfleet station. Under all options, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge would be available to link Northfleet to Ebbsfleet International.
- 2.3.4. It is expected that at least six additional Elizabeth Line trains per hour would operate into central London, with the potential for more if more expensive infrastructure is built to allow them to operate. This would reduce the journey time into central London in the west, towards Ebbsfleet in the east, and to intermediate stations within the study area.
- 2.3.5. All stations served by the Crossrail services would likely be rebuilt with step free access.
- 2.3.6. These options are expected to support the highest amount of new housing and employment growth within the study area. They will also be the most expensive to deliver, may require some land take and have greater construction impacts. These options would have the highest beneficial impact on reducing carbon emissions from transport and improving air quality.

National Rail Improvements

Figure 2-4 - National Rail Option

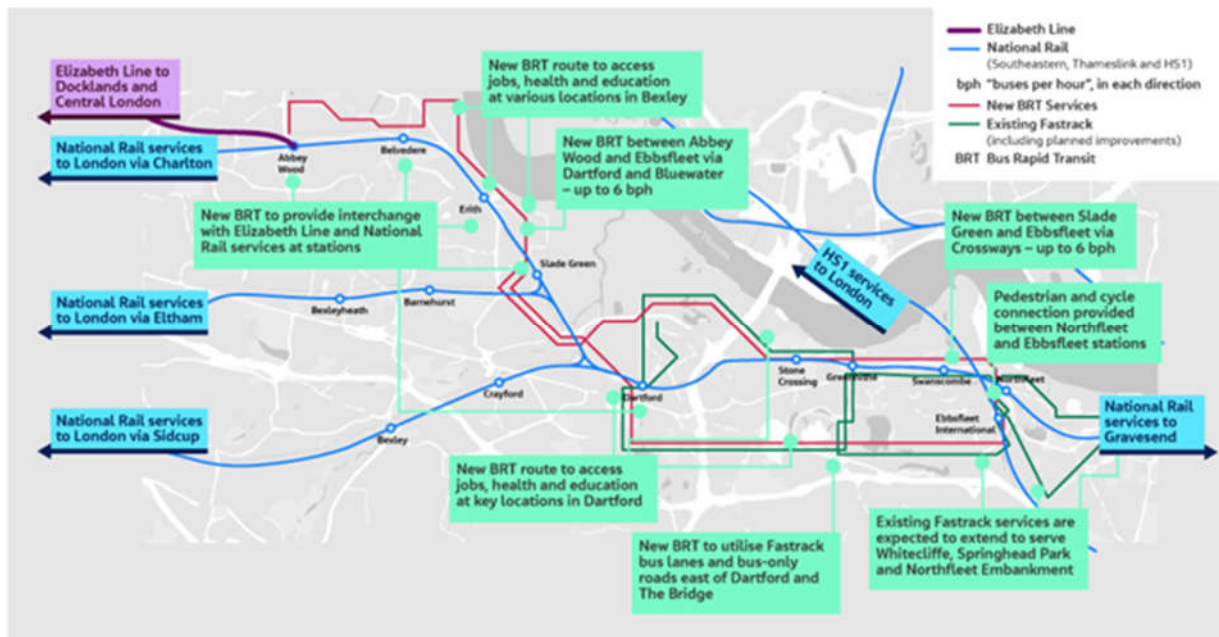


- 2.3.7. Improvements to the existing National Rail services (Southeastern and Thameslink) between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet could include running a small number of additional services, as well as re-timetabling existing services so that there are more direct services between these two stations. Services would serve all intermediate stations along the route. A pedestrian and cycle bridge would be available at Northfleet to allow access to Ebbsfleet International.
- 2.3.8. This would mean that passengers travelling to central London would either have to change at Abbey Wood to access the Elizabeth Line, or could stay on existing services which serve London Bridge and London Cannon Street.

- 2.3.9. This option would result in an increase in the frequency of rail services compared to the current service pattern but would be a lower number of services than the Elizabeth Line options.
- 2.3.10. This option would likely result in lower levels of inward investment and fewer new homes and jobs than an extension to the Elizabeth Line. It would also be cheaper, depending on the final type of infrastructure required. This option would be beneficial in reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, although not to the same extent as the Elizabeth Line options.

Bus Rapid Transit between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet

Figure 2-5 - Bus Rapid Transit Option



- 2.3.11. This option would use a mix of dedicated bus lanes and traffic management measures on the existing road network to provide a high quality, fast bus service that connects corridor residents with employment areas, town centres and rail stations. It would be similar in nature to the current Fastrack services between Dartford and Gravesend. As part of this option there would be:
 - Two new dedicated routes connecting with existing Fastrack services and infrastructure
 - Bus stops provided approximately 300 to 500 metres apart.
 - Use of single-deck electric buses.
 - Operation of a bus up to every 10 minutes in each direction on each route.
- 2.3.12. The delivery of this option would require some reallocation of road space which may reduce the capacity of the road network for cars and other vehicles. The new bus services would provide enhanced connections to existing rail stations and serving developments across the wider area.
- 2.3.13. This option could be the lowest cost to deliver and would also likely result in the lowest level of inward investment, and delivery of new homes and jobs. This option would be beneficial in reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, although not to the same extent as the Elizabeth Line options

2.4. Structure of the report

- 2.4.1. The next section of the report summarises the engagement, consultation and publicity carried out to encourage stakeholders to participate. The remainder of the report analyses the responses to the questionnaire, including a breakdown of individual questions, to identify the main themes and issues raised by respondents. The final section concludes the report.

3. Scheme Consultation

- 3.1.1. A public consultation was launched on 26 January 2021 to gather the opinion of stakeholders, including the general public about the proposed options to enhance public transport services in the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet area. This section summarises the engagement and consultation activities carried out, the means by which the consultation was publicised, the steps taken to ensure equal outcomes, and the next stage of the project.

3.2. Summary of engagement

Stakeholder events

- 3.2.1. Due to the global pandemic caused by the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 (also known as Covid-19), no stakeholder events were able to take place in order to adhere to both social distancing rules, and the various national and local lockdowns imposed throughout the engagement and consultation periods. The consultation was limited to digital engagement through the use of a website: www.abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com

Publicity

3.2.2. The public consultation was widely publicised in various local publications, blogs and social media sites after the issue of a press release. C2E Partnership organisations also promoted the consultation through their own channels. The online consultation was accessed via the following top third-party sites that offered links to the consultation website:

www.ianvisits.co.uk	18% (525 visits)
www.kentonline.co.uk	16% (461 visits)
www.bexley.gov.uk	16% (456 visits)
m.facebook.com	16% (442 visits)
www.newsshopper.co.uk	8% (233 visits)
www.fromthemurkydepths.co.uk	4% (119 visits)
Inks.gd	4% (115 visits)
t.co	3% (94 visits)
www.google.com	2% (67 visits)
www.dartford.gov.uk	2% (54 visits)

3.2.3. Emails were also sent to a selection of key stakeholder organisations to encourage participation in the consultation.

3.3. Summary

3.3.1. The consultation period lasted for a total of 5 weeks, running from 00.01am on Tuesday 26th January 2021 until 11.59pm on Wednesday 3rd March 2021. During this period, stakeholders were encouraged to complete the online response form available on <https://www.abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com/>. Stakeholders who wished to get further information about the study, and stakeholders who were contacted directly, were encouraged to reach out to the study team by emailing hello@abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com

3.3.2. All consultation materials were published online and available on the consultation website throughout the consultation period.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1.1. This section presents the results from the online responses. This includes a summary of who responded, and analysis of the main themes and issues raised in the responses.

4.2. Sample

4.2.1. In total 1021 responses were received to this consultation which ran between 26th January and 03rd March 2021. These included:

- 1014 online responses
- 7 letters

4.2.2. It should be noted that respondents to a consultation are a self-selecting sample made up of those who have chosen to respond, that is to say a non-scientific sample. Responses therefore reflect the views of only those who respond. This provides an invaluable insight into the concerns, themes and issues surrounding a proposal, although these views may be skewed towards a particular viewpoint and thus should not be considered a fully representative sample of the population.

4.2.3. Regardless of this, all responses and comments have been duly noted and considered.

4.2.4. As part of the public consultation, 18 targeted stakeholders including some statutory consultees were informed about the proposals and provided with the opportunity to provide a formal response to the consultation.

4.3. Analysis of the responses

4.3.1. A total of 1014 responses were received via the online form. The analysis in Chapter 5 reflects only the online responses received, with responses received from targeted stakeholders via letters discussed in Chapter 6.

4.3.2. The online response form comprised of a mix of closed 'tick-box' questions, with some questions respondents able to tick multiple responses and others a single response. Respondents were also given an 'other' option for two of the questions presented, allowing for longer written responses if their desired response was not available.

4.3.3. It is important to note that respondents will have answered questions based on their current experiences of the transport network that respondents have had and consequently will not account for planned improvements expected as previously outlined in section 2.2.

5. Responses to the online response form

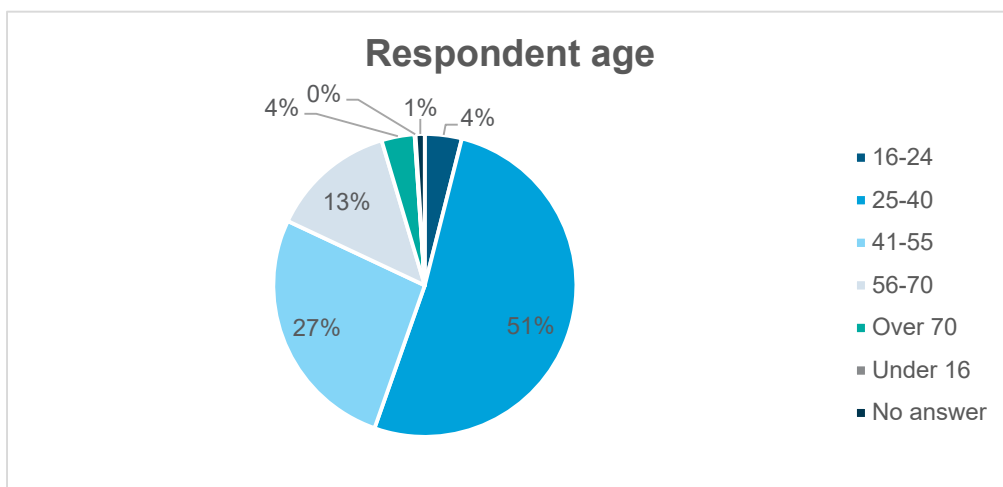
5.1.1. The graphs and charts below summarise the responses to the closed questions in the response form. In total, 1014 online responses were received.

5.2. Demographics

5.2.1. Figure 3 provides the breakdown of responses from the optional demographic question included within the response form. The only demographic question raised within this consultation was in relation to the age of respondents.

Respondent age

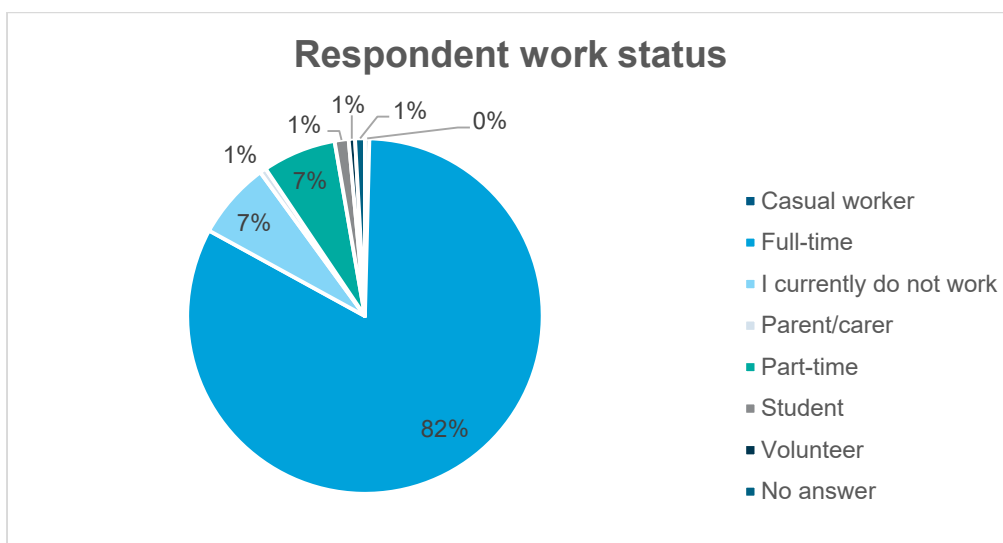
Figure 5-1 – Breakdown of respondent age



5.2.2. Of the 1014 online responses received, 51% of respondents were between the ages of 25-40, 27% were aged 41-55, 17% of respondents were over the age of 56. Of the remaining responses received 4% were aged between 16-24 and 1% chose not to answer the question.

Respondent work status

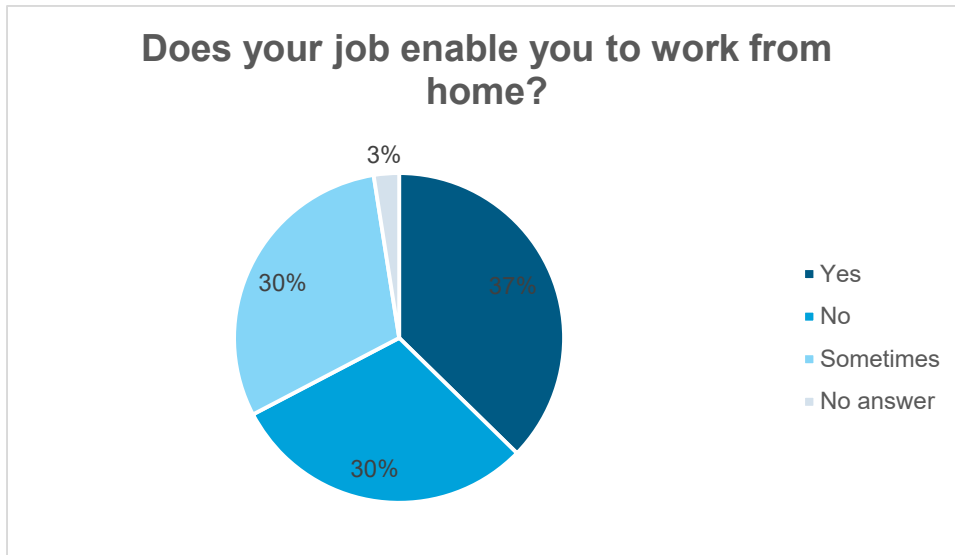
Figure 5-2 - Breakdown of respondent work status



5.2.3. Of the 1014 online responses received, 82% of respondents stated their current work status as full-time workers, a further 7% identified as part-time workers. An additional 7% of respondents noted that they do not currently work and 1% identified as students at present. 1% of respondents noted their status as either a parent or carer, and 1% identifying as a volunteer.

Respondent work from home status

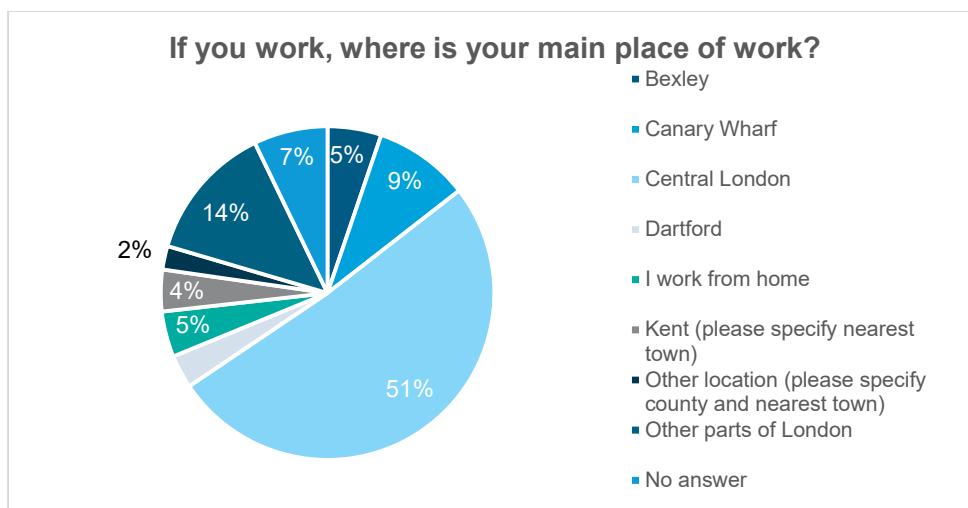
Figure 5-3 - Breakdown of respondent work from home status



5.2.4. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether their jobs enable them to work from home. Of the 1014 respondents 37% of respondents noted their ability to work from home, with 30% only able to utilise this option occasionally. An additional 30% noted their job does not enable them to work from home and 3% respondents chose not to answer the question.

Respondent key employment destination

Figure 5-4 – Breakdown of key employment destination



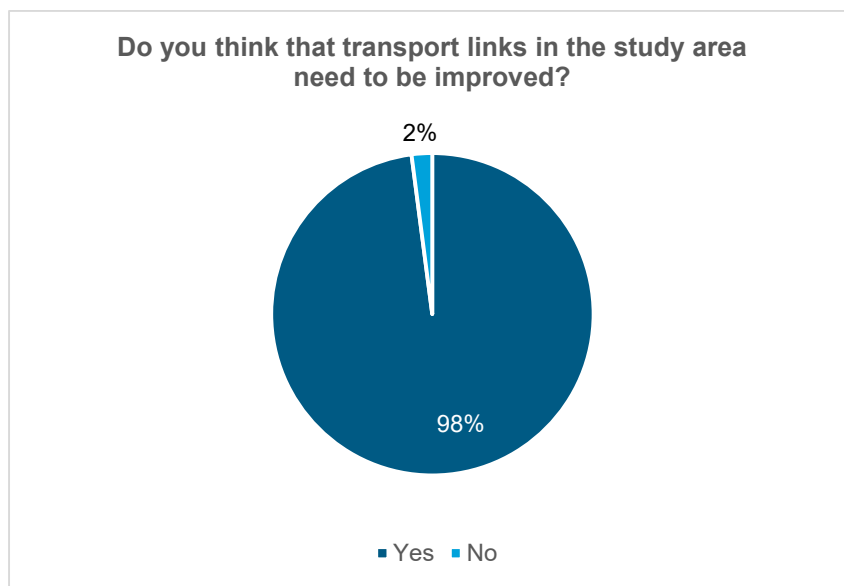
5.2.5. The results below show that, of the 1014 responses received, 51% note Central London as their main place of work. A further 2% noted their key employment destination to be other parts of London, including Canary Wharf (9%) and Bexley (5%). Additionally, 7% identified areas within the county of Kent as their key employment destination, Dartford (3%) and other areas such as Gravesend and Medway were mentioned.

5.3. Views on improvement of transport links within the study area

Question 1: Need for transport links in the study area need to be improved

5.3.1. Q1 asked respondents whether they supported improvements to the transport links within the study area. The results below show that the majority of respondents were in support of the improvements to transport links within the designated study area. Of the 1014 responses received, 98% (987) of respondents indicated their support. With only 2% (21) of respondents stating they believe there is no need for transport links in the study area to be improved.

Figure 5-5 - shows responses to Q1: Do you think that transport links in the study area need to be improved?



Question 2: Main transport challenges for people living and working in the study area?

Table 1. Breakdown of main transport Challenges

Theme	Number of responses
Trains are too slow/ take too long to where I want to go to	685
Trains are too crowded at peak times	603
Train tickets are too expensive	591
I have to change buses/ trains too many times to get to where I need to be	565
Buses are too unreliable	281
Trains are too unreliable	272
There are too many engineering works/ faults causing delays	255
Buses are too crowded at peak times	217
There are no bus stops/ train stations within walking distance from my house	134
I don't think there are any problems with the transport network	24
Other (please state)	100

5.3.2. Question 2 asked respondents to indicate the main transport challenges for those living and working within the study area, from a pre-populated list of responses. Of the 1014 respondents, 1004 selected the options which categorised the challenges faced.

5.3.3. Journey time was selected as the greatest transport challenge by respondents, with 68% (685) respondents indicating that the trains are too slow/ take too long to where I want to get to as their top choice.

Other common challenges experienced by respondents included overcrowding at peak times, an issue highlighted by 60% (603) of respondents.

The cost of travel was emphasised as a challenge, with 59% (591) of respondents selecting the cost of train tickets being too expensive as an option.

Lack of direct transport services was selected by 56% (565) of respondents, citing the challenge of having to change buses/trains too many times to get to their destination.

The unreliability of bus services (28%- 281 respondents) and train services (27%- 272 respondents) was also perceived to be a challenge by respondents.

The impact of engineering works and faults on the transport network and the subsequent delays experienced as a result was selected as a challenge for 25% (255) of respondents.

Overcrowding on bus services during peak times was selected as a challenge by 22% (217) respondents.

Proximity to bus stops/ train stations within walking distance of the home of respondents was chosen as a challenge by 13% (134) of those who provided responses.

Only 2% (24) of those who provided responses to question 2 indicated that they felt there were no problems with the transport network at present.

- 5.3.4. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate other challenges not mentioned within the suggested list of responses. The following challenges were raised by respondents in the 'other' category:

Greater connectivity

No connections with TfL services. - A2EC-00010

Lack of convenient connections at Northfleet/Ebbsfleet and some other locations – A2EC-00715

Connectivity is crucial. Any new infrastructure must consider population growth in the Northwest Kent area, going onwards. – A2EC- 00843

There are several reason lines going through the borough but none of them are easily interconnected. – A2EC- 00879

Frequency of services

There isn't enough frequency of trains in the area especially with some development plans. – A2EC-00036

Trains not frequent enough- A2EC- 00164

If frequency is improved would be a better option at peak times- A2EC- 00409

Lack of integrated transport

Lack of integrated transport... with timetables of buses & trains aligned (or frequent turn up & go service intervals) – A2EC-00022

Lack of integrated ticketing

More fares integration needed contactless/Oyster style ticketing- A2EC-00022

Oyster not available at Greenhithe or Ebbsfleet- A2EC-00628

Safety

Slade Green Station is particularly poor in terms of facilities and I often do not feel safe as a solo female passenger there. – A2EC-00154

Security on public transport needs to be higher. – A2EC-00420

Increased car usage in local area

Too many people rely on their cars to move around- A2EC-00781

We need to reduce car use in North Kent because this has increased. – A2EC-00357

Road traffic/ Congestion

I am aware that lots of commuters drive from Dartford and Kent to park in Bexley, specifically in the north of the borough, to board the trains in Erith, Belvedere etc. This is due to the rail service from

*their local areas being too slow, expensive, and infrequent. This contributes the major issue of parking, **congestion** on the A2 and overcrowding on the rail network in the north of the borough. - A2EC-00799*

Traffic on the A2 is at a standstill every day but there is no reliable public transport option between Gravesend/ Ebbsfleet and South East London- A2EC-00226

Question 3: What do you think are the most important factors we should be considering when deciding on the best solutions?

Table 2. Breakdown of important factors in deciding best solutions

Theme	Number of responses
Being able to travel into other parts of London	715
Frequency of service	687
Direct services	673
Having more choices in the way I travel	568
Improving transport to cater for new housing and developments	517
Trying to keep the operating costs as low as possible (e.g. ticketing costs)	417
Having more access to different areas in the study area	411
Improving air quality in the study area	365
Reducing noise pollution in the study area	211
Trying to keep the cost of the design/ construction as low as possible	182
Other	62

5.3.5. Question 3 asked respondents to indicate the most important factors to be considered when deciding on the best solutions from a pre-populated list of responses. Of the 1014 respondents, 1009 selected the options presented for most important factors to be considered.

5.3.6. The ability to travel into other parts of London was chosen as the most important factor in deciding on the best solution by 71% (715) of respondents.

Of the 1009 responses received to this question, 68% (687) identified frequency of service as one of the most important factors and 67% (673) of total respondents selecting the option of direct services as an important factor in making a decision on the best solution.

Having more choice in the way they travel was an important factor for 56% (568) of respondents. 51% (517) of respondents selected the option which considered the need to improve transport to cater for new housing and developments.

Of the 1009 responses, 41% (417) selected operating cost as an important factor; selecting the option with the intention to keep operating costs as low as possible.

Accessibility to areas outside of the study area was an important consideration for 41% (411) of respondents.

Environmental considerations were also selected by respondents, with 36% (365) respondents highlighting air quality improvements in the study area as an important factor and 21% (211) respondents favouring the need to reduce noise pollution in the study area.

Keeping the cost of design/ construction as low as possible was selected as an important factor by 18% (182) of respondents.

- 5.3.7. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate other important factors to be considered when deciding on the best solutions. The following factors were raised by respondents in the 'other' category:

Integrated ticketing

Integrated ticketing. – A2EC-00022

Ability to tap in with Oyster. A2EC-000628

Speed of service

Speed of service. A2EC-00367

Faster limited stop service between Dartford and London Bridge for Thameslink. – A2EC-00034

Faster services for disabled commuters. A2EC-00906

Increased capacity

Increasing capacity to reduce overcrowding. A2EC-00955

New routes

Generating new route options. – A2EC-00605

Availability of more local bus routes to Ebbsfleet- A2EC00765

5.4. Support for preferred options

Question 4- Please tell us whether you support any of the following options currently being considered

- 5.4.1. To provide a clear picture of the respondent support for each of the proposed transport scheme, we have divided responses into groups based on their responses to Question 4 of the online response form. The preferred options, as well as number of respondents who selected each option are shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5-6 - Breakdown of responses of supported options

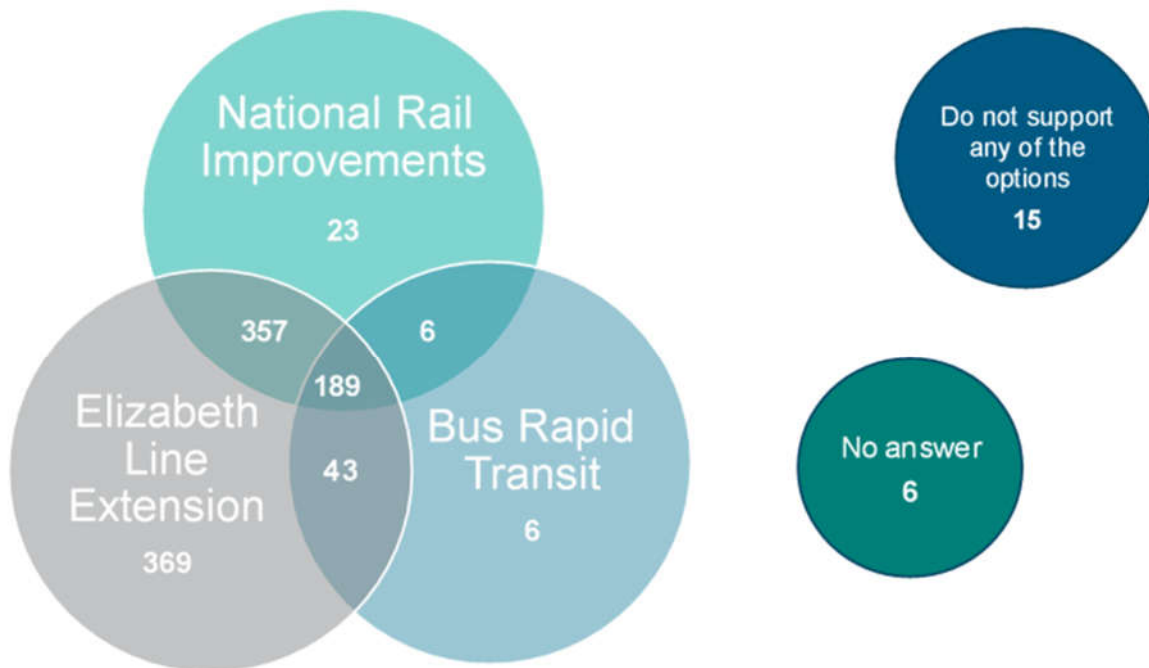


Table 3. Breakdown of responses of supported options

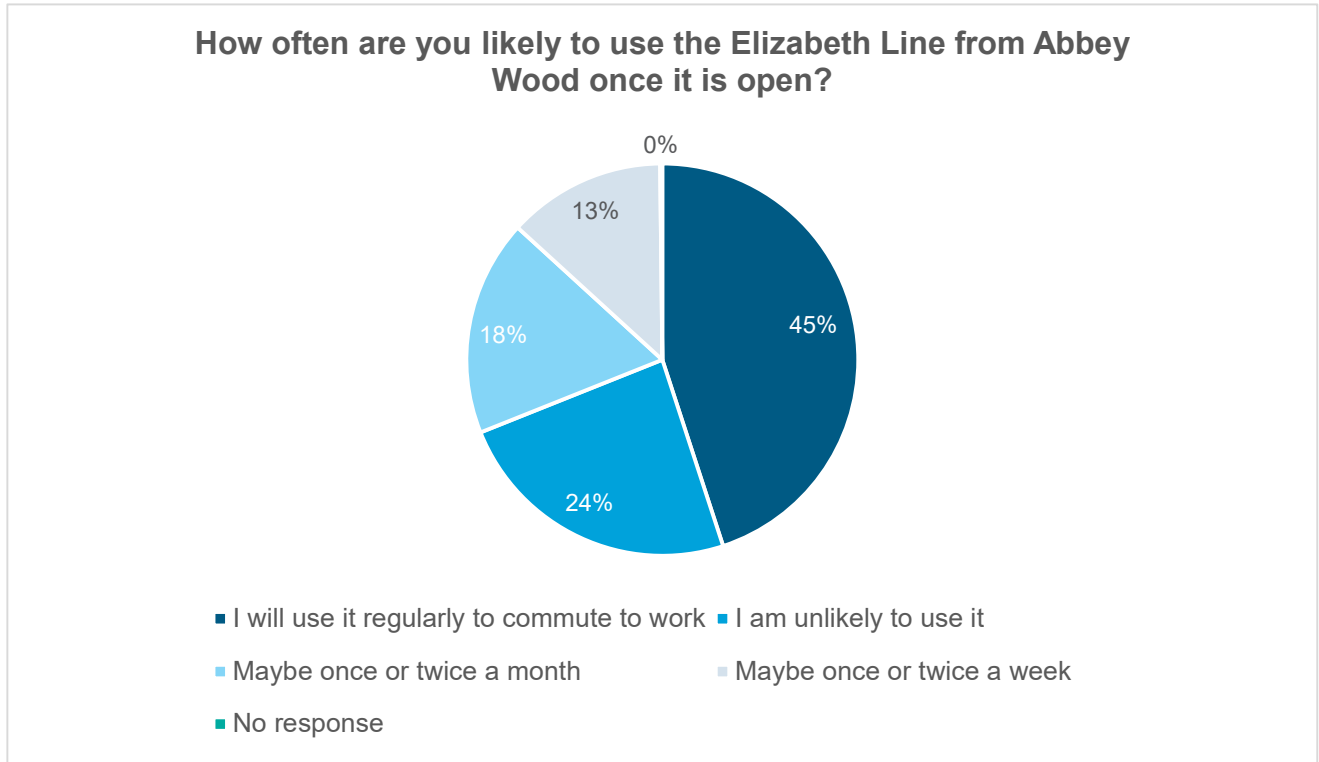
Transport Scheme	Number of respondents	Percentage
Elizabeth Line Extension only	369	36%
National Rail Improvements only	23	2%
Bus Rapid Transit only	6	1%
Elizabeth Line Extension <i>and</i> Bus Rapid Transit	43	4%
Elizabeth Line Extension <i>and</i> National Rail Improvements	357	35%
National Rail Extension <i>and</i> Bus Rapid Transit	6	1%
Elizabeth Line Extension <i>and</i> National Rail Improvements <i>and</i> Bus Rapid Transit	189	19%
Do not support any of the options	15	1%
No answer	6	1%
	1014	100%

- 5.4.2. As shown in the table and Venn Diagram above, an extension of the Elizabeth Line (served by Crossrail) from Abbey Wood to Northfleet/Ebbsfleet received the most support from respondents, with 94% (958) respondents stating their support for this option. Improvements to the existing National Rail service received support from 57% (575). The Bus Rapid Transit scheme between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet received the least support from respondents, with the option receiving support from 25% (244) of respondents.
- 5.4.3. Of the 1014 respondents, 36% (369) supported an Elizabeth Line Extension *only* option. A further 4% (43) of respondents supported an Elizabeth Line Extension *and* Bus Rapid Transit option. An additional 35% (357) of respondents chose an Elizabeth Line Extension *and* National Rail Improvements. Only 19% (189) of respondents chose all 3 schemes, which was a combination of Elizabeth Line Extension *and* National Rail Improvements *and* Bus Rapid Transit.
- 5.4.4. Of the 1014 respondents, 2% (23) supported National Rail Improvements *only*. A further 1% (6) of respondents supported a National Rail Improvements *and* Bus Rapid Transit option.
- 5.4.5. Only 1% (6 respondents) supported the Bus Rapid Transit *only* option.
- 5.4.6. 1% (15) of respondents indicated that they do not support any of the options presented, and the remaining 1% (6) respondents chose not to provide a response to the question.

6. Developing Options

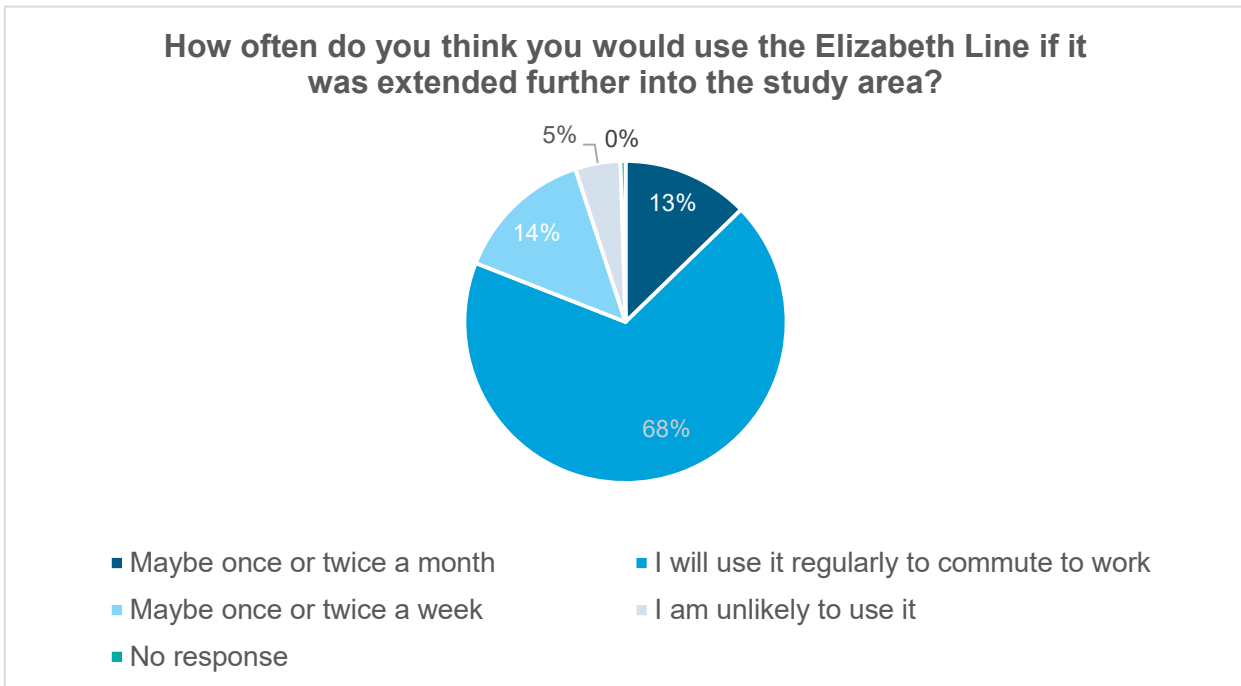
6.1.1. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide more insight into their support of the individual options in Questions, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Figure 6-1 - Question 5 - How often are you likely to use the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood once it is open?



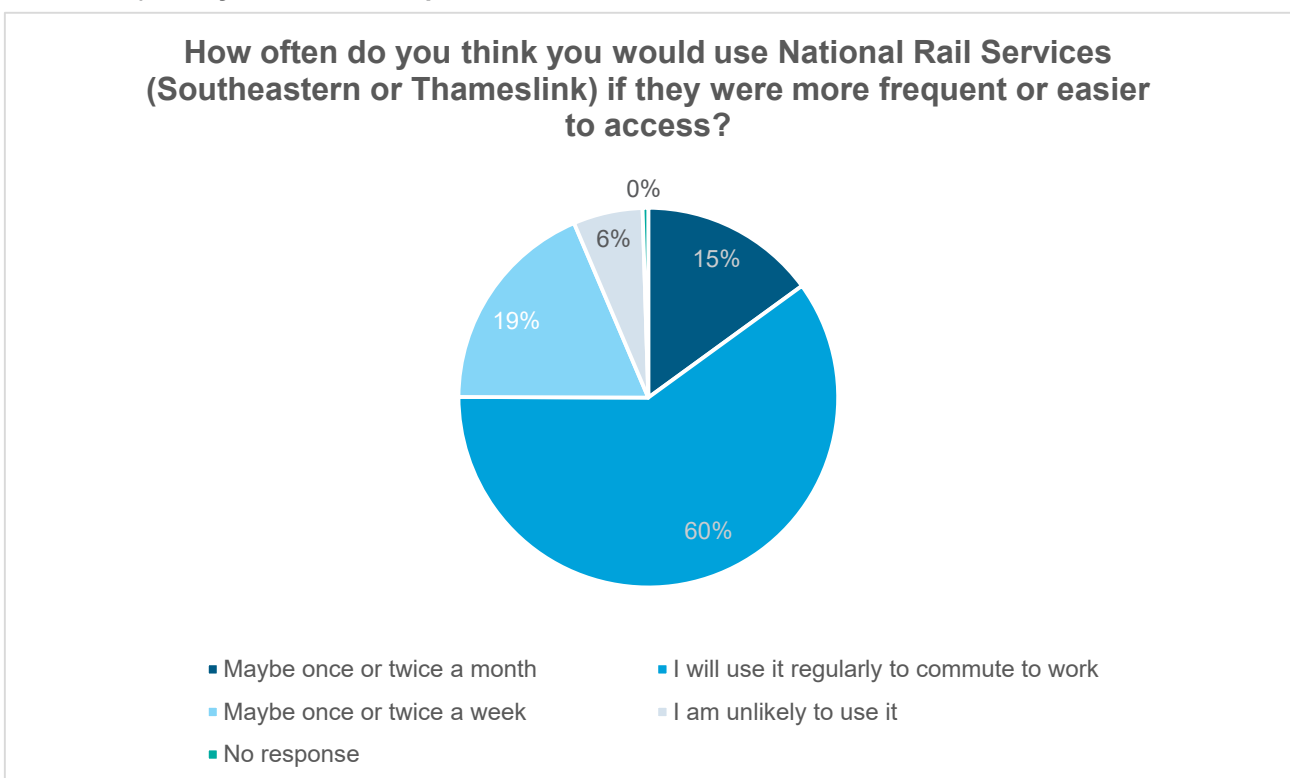
6.1.2. Almost half of the respondents (45%; 456) indicated their likelihood to use the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood regularly to commute to work. However, almost a quarter (24%; 243) of responses noted the unlikelihood of using the service. A further 18% (181) of respondents indicated they will use the service possibly once or twice a month and a further 13% (132) respondents indicated that they would use the service once or twice a week. The remaining 2 respondents chose not to provide a response.

Figure 6-2 - Question 6 - How often do you think you would use the Elizabeth Line if it was extended further into the study area?



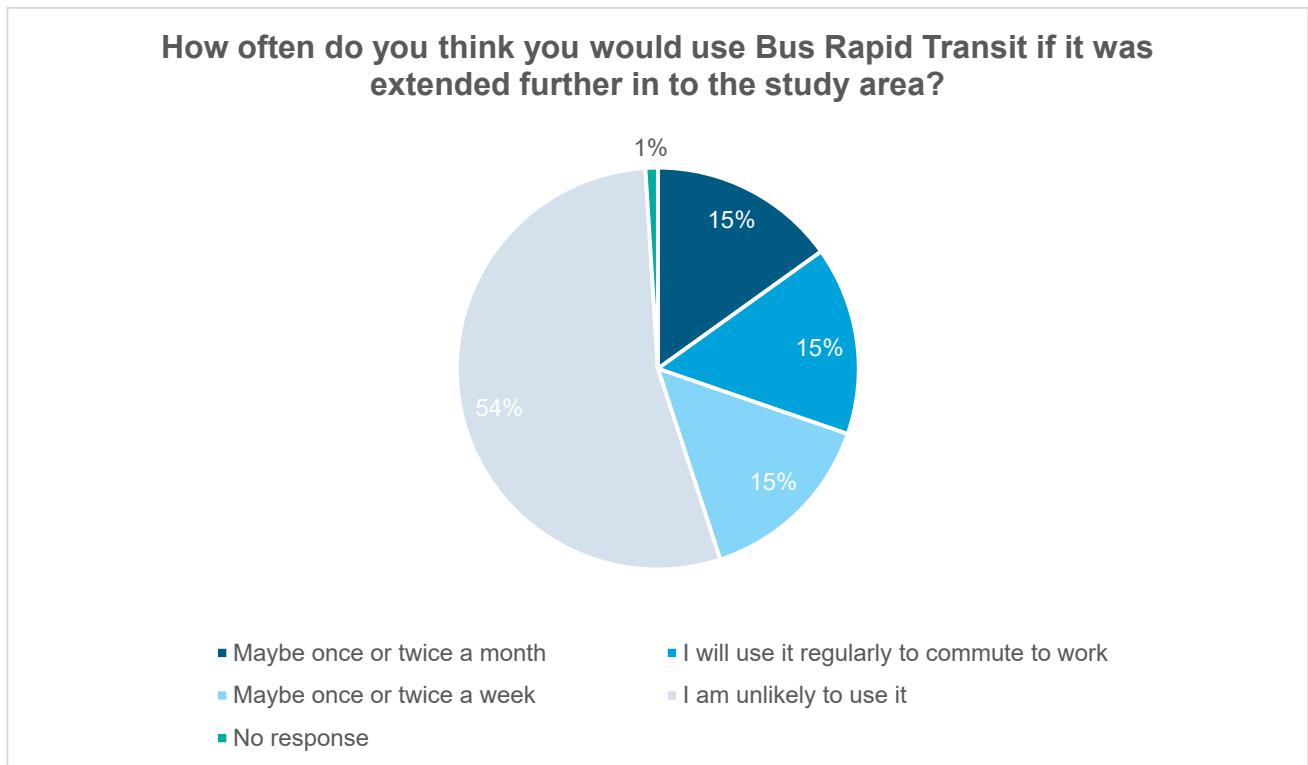
6.1.3. Over half of the respondents (68%; 692) indicated their likelihood to use the Elizabeth Line regularly to commute to work if it was to be extended further into the study area. A further 13% (129) of respondents indicated they will use the service possibly once or twice a month and a further 14% (142) respondents indicated that they would use the service once or twice a week. However, 5% (46) of respondents noted the unlikelihood of using the service. The remaining 5 respondents chose not to provide a response.

Figure 6-3 - Question 7 - How often do you think you would use National Rail Services (Southeastern or Thameslink) if they were more frequent or easier to access?



6.1.4. Over half of the respondents (60%; 609) indicated their likelihood to use the National Rail services regularly to commute to work if it they were more frequent and easier to access. A further 15% (152) of respondents indicated they will use the service possibly once or twice a month and a further 19% (188) respondents indicated that they would use the service once or twice a week. Whilst an additional 6% (60) of respondents noted the unlikelihood of using the service. The remaining 5 respondents chose not to provide a response

Figure 6-4 - Question 8 - How often do you think you would use Bus Rapid Transit if it was extended further into the study area?



6.1.5. Over half of the respondents (54%; 548) indicated their unlikelihood to use the Bus Rapid Transit service if it was extended further into the study area. Only 15% (154) of respondents indicated their interest in using the service regularly to commute to work. An additional 15% (153) of respondents indicated they will use the service possibly once or twice a month and a further 15% (149) respondents indicated that they would use the service once or twice a week. The remaining 1% (10) of respondents chose not to provide a response.

6.2. Elizabeth Line Extension from Abbey Wood to Northfleet/Ebbsfleet

- 6.2.1. The proposed Elizabeth Line Extension from Abbey Wood to Northfleet/Ebbsfleet was the most supported option of those presented to consultees.
- 6.2.2. The results from the online survey demonstrated the support for this option with 94% of respondents signifying their support for all three of the Elizabeth Line Extension proposals placed forward.
- 6.2.3. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the key challenges experienced by those who live and work in the designated study area, and who also supported the proposals of the Elizabeth Line Extension to Northfleet/ Ebbsfleet.

Table 4. Breakdown of main challenges experienced by respondents (Elizabeth Line Extension-Preferred Option)

Theme	Number of responses
Trains are too slow/ take too long to where I want to go to	670
Trains are too crowded at peak times	579
Train tickets are too expensive	564
I have to change buses/ trains too many times to get to where I need to be	553
Buses are too unreliable	270
Trains are too unreliable	265
There are too many engineering works/ faults causing delays	243
Buses are too crowded at peak times	204
There are no bus stops/ train stations within walking distance from my house	134
I don't think there are any problems with the transport network	16
Other (please state)	88

Table 5. Breakdown of Important factors in determining best solution (Elizabeth Line Extension-Preferred Option)

Theme	Number of responses
Being able to travel into other parts of London	695
Frequency of service	663
Direct services	657
Having more choices in the way I travel	549
Improving transport to cater for new housing and developments	502
Trying to keep the operating costs as low as possible (e.g. ticketing costs)	417
Having more access to different areas in the study area	400
Improving air quality in the study area	336
Reducing noise pollution in the study area	188
Trying to keep the cost of the design/ construction as low as possible	164
Other	52

- 6.2.4. The three options presented as part of the Elizabeth Line extension included the potential to provide a Crossrail Extension from Abbey Wood to Northfleet. Whilst this service would offer commuters direct services into London from Northfleet (a factor deemed as important in providing a solution by 69% (650) of respondents who supported this option), it would provide the lowest frequency of the Crossrail options. However, at an assumed 6 trains per hour the Elizabeth Line service provided would still be considered to provide a frequent “turn up and go” level of service.
- 6.2.5. Option 2 provides a faster service for commuters, providing a solution for 70% (670) of respondents who identified, slow train services as a current challenge faced by those in the study area. This option also provides an increased frequency in the service provided for commuters; a factor deemed as important when providing a solution to the issues faced at present. On the other hand, this option does not provide direct services into London from stations east of Dartford to Northfleet. Consequently, the option offers reduced connectivity enhancement, in comparison to the other two Elizabeth Line options, for those within the study area who identify challenges in relation to connectivity and direct services into London. Improved connectivity to new housing and developments was a common theme amongst those who supported this option (52%; 502 respondents).
- 6.2.6. Out of all three Elizabeth Line options presented, option 3 best addresses the challenges identified by commuters, as well as incorporates the solutions mentioned by those who intend to use the proposed service. This service provides the desired high frequency of service, a factor deemed essential by 69% (663) of respondents. Additionally, by providing direct faster services into London to the length of the study area, it provides faster services, reducing journey times and eliminates the need to change services too many times, as stated as a challenge by 58% (553) of respondents. By extending the service into Northfleet, respondents are provided greater access into the study area (42%; 394 respondents). Furthermore, increased frequency of services also addresses the challenge of overcrowding on train services at peak times (60%; 579 respondents).

- 6.2.7. The proposed Elizabeth Line Extension not only provides solutions in relation to public transport challenges faced by commuters currently, it will also address any potential challenges that may arise as the Covid-19 pandemic comes to an end. Of the respondents in support of the proposed Elizabeth Line Extension, 49% (469 respondents) indicated that their travel habits are unlikely to change and they will continue to utilise public transport. A further 26% (244 respondents) indicated the likelihood of using trains more, suggesting the issue in relation to overcrowding has the potential to increase, and more people within the study area requiring direct and faster links into London.
- 6.2.8. Whilst it is important to have improved train services, there is a desire amongst respondents to have a more frequent services which increased connectivity to other transport services and areas, as well as incorporates integrated ticketing. Respondents who selected this option also desire a faster, more direct service into London that takes into consideration the proposed housing and development opportunities within the study area.

6.3. National Rail Improvements

- 6.3.1. Improvements to the existing National Rail services (Southeastern and Thameslink) between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet was the second most preferred option amongst respondents. Over half (57%; 575 respondents) of those who provided a response through the online response form indicated their support for this option. Table 6 and 7 provides a breakdown of the key challenges and most important factors in determining a solution by respondents who supported the improvements to the existing National Rail service as a scheme.

Table 6. Breakdown of main challenges experienced by respondents (National Rail Improvements-Preferred Option)

Theme	Number of responses
Being able to travel into other parts of London	406
Frequency of service	431
Direct services	400
Having more choices in the way I travel	335
Improving transport to cater for new housing and developments	304
Trying to keep the operating costs as low as possible (e.g. ticketing costs)	266
Having more access to different areas in the study area	257
Improving air quality in the study area	234
Reducing noise pollution in the study area	140
Trying to keep the cost of the design/ construction as low as possible	125
Other	39

- 6.3.2. Whilst this option provides more direct services between Abbey Wood and Northfleet and Ebbsfleet, passengers who intend on travelling into Central London would have to interchange at Abbey Wood to access Elizabeth Line services or continue on the existing service, which goes into London Bridge and London Cannon Street. As a result of this, the challenges emphasised by respondents around the need to change services too many times in order to get to their destination aren't resolved, a challenge selected by 57% (328) who supported this option. Increased service frequency was a factor in determining the best solution by 75% (431) of respondents who supported improvements to the existing National Rail services. Though this option provides passengers with more services in comparison to the current service pattern, most notably from stations east of Dartford to Northfleet, it doesn't provide as significant a service enhancement as an extended Elizabeth Line service for the entire corridor.
- 6.3.3. Additionally, of the 561 respondents who stated their support for improvements to existing National Rail services, 71% (406) stated one of their key considerations in selecting a preferred option was to have a service that connects them to other parts of London. With 54% (309 respondents) who stated their support of this option having to commute to Central London for work, having increased accessibility to other parts of this area is crucial when assessing the options for further development.
- 6.3.4. Respondents who indicated their support of this option are also unlikely to change their travel habits in a post Covid-19 world. 47% (269) of those who indicated their support noted their travel habits are unlikely to change when things return to normal, and a further 24% (138 respondents) suggested their desire to be travelling by train more often. However, a limited number of respondents indicated the likelihood of traveling by train less (17%; 98 respondents).

6.4. Bus Rapid Transit

- 6.4.1. Whilst this was the least supported option of the three presented to stakeholders, this scheme addressed some of the key challenges experienced by respondents living and working within the designated study area. Table 8 and 9 provides a breakdown of the key challenges and most important factors in determining a solution by respondents who supported the Bus Rapid Transit as a scheme.

Table 7. Breakdown of main challenges experienced by respondents (Bus Rapid Transit- Preferred Option)

Theme	Number of responses
Trains are too slow/ take too long to where I want to go to	157
Trains are too crowded at peak times	157
Train tickets are too expensive	158
I have to change buses/ trains too many times to get to where I need to be	157
Buses are too unreliable	88
Trains are too unreliable	74
There are too many engineering works/ faults causing delays	77
Buses are too crowded at peak times	92
There are no bus stops/ train stations within walking distance from my house	50
I don't think there are any problems with the transport network	7
Other (please state)	30

Table 8. Breakdown of important factors in determining best solution (Bus Rapid Transit- Preferred Option)

Theme	Number of responses
Being able to travel into other parts of London	180
Frequency of service	174
Direct services	169
Having more choices in the way I travel	161
Improving transport to cater for new housing and developments	144
Trying to keep the operating costs as low as possible (e.g. ticketing costs)	123
Having more access to different areas in the study area	135
Improving air quality in the study area	110
Reducing noise pollution in the study area	70
Trying to keep the cost of the design/ construction as low as possible	72
Other	17

- 6.4.2. This option that would use a mix of dedicated bus lanes and traffic management measures on the existing road network was the least popular option amongst respondents (25%; 244 respondents). Those who stated their support for this option also noted the cost of train tickets currently as too expensive (65%; 158 respondents); as well as overcrowding on the train services (64%; 157 respondents) and bus services (38%; 92 respondents) during peak times. Another challenge observed by those who demonstrated support for the Bus Rapid Transit was around the speed of train services and journey times experienced (64%; 157 respondents). Through dedicated bus lanes and traffic management measures, this intervention could improve journey times for those travelling on the existing road network.
- 6.4.3. Some respondents who supported the option of a Bus Rapid Transit systems noted the inequalities surrounding public transport within the local area. The need for more frequent bus services (71%; 174 responses), with increased connectivity to mainline stations for commuters was prevalent within the 'other' (7%) responses provided. A particular respondent noted that with journeys taken in the local area being under 5 miles, these journeys could be improved through investment into the local public transport infrastructure. This option provides those travelling within the designated study area more choices in the way they travel (66%; 161 respondents) and improves connectivity within the study area; a factor deemed important by 55% (135) of respondents.
- 6.4.4. The majority of respondents (48%; 118) who supported this option identify their main place of work as being within Central London. Only 16% (39) respondents who indicated their support of the Bus Rapid Transit live within the county of Kent. This suggests that the majority of those supporting the option would not be utilising it as the primary mode to work or may not be located to take advantage of the service with significant regularity.

- 6.4.5. Respondents who indicated their support of this option are also unlikely to change their travel habits in a post Covid-19 world. 43% (104) of those who indicated their support noted their travel habits are unlikely to change when things return to normal, and a further 17% (41 respondents) suggested their desire to be travelling by bus more often. However, a limited number of respondents indicated the likelihood of traveling by bus less (5%; 12 respondents).

7. Written Responses

- 7.1.1. There were seven written responses received in relation to this consultation. Responses were received from the following stakeholders:
- Transport for the South East
 - Highways England (Spatial Planning)
 - Peabody
 - London Resort Holdings
 - Blueco Limited (Owners of Bluewater)
 - Port of London Authority
 - London City Airport
- 7.1.2. Transport for the South East, Port of London Authority, Blueco Limited, London City Airport and Peabody confirmed their support for the options presented, with support noted for rail-based improvements and extensions. The need for transport improvements and investment into infrastructure between Thamesmead and the wider Thames Estuary area in order to deliver much needed housing, jobs and drive economic growth. The options presented were perceived to be a positive step forward in improving North Kent's radial connectivity.
- 7.1.3. London City Airport outlined their preferred intervention as Option 2 of the Elizabeth Line Extension, as this would provide the most benefit in terms of speed, connectivity and ease of travel for commuters and potential airport passengers alike. They also noted the potential for a new station in the Royal Docks at Silvertown, which could serve London City Airport and further strengthen the business case for extending the Elizabeth Line by creating a strategic transport interchange, as mentioned within their 2018 letter to the Chancellor in support of the C2E project.
- 7.1.4. Transport for the South were keen not to dismiss the Bus Rapid Transit operation, rather seeing this intervention as complementary to the rail-based solutions, as opposed as offering this option as a standalone solution. BRT alone could not provide the step-change in connectivity the corridor requires both to drive mode shift and to unlock its full development potential (especially for new housing). Highways England went further to support this option and perceived it to be most likely to offer the most modal shift.
- 7.1.5. Highways England stated no objection in principle to any option, and very much welcome proposals seeking to increase the use of sustainable transport means and achieve modal shift away from private car use of the Strategic Road Network. It was further suggested that any Transport Assessments undertaken carefully consider the impacts of other known pending developments, such as Lower Thames Crossing, London Resort and development at Tilbury.
- 7.1.6. Further growth at Ebbsfleet and the prospect of high passenger demand from London Resort will put pressure on the passenger capacity of HS1 domestic services.
- 7.1.7. Blueco Limited noted their preference for the Bus Rapid Transit Option to not further exacerbate traffic congestion currently experienced in the area, and for prioritising buses over general traffic. Therefore, resulting in visitors not travelling to Bluewater.
- 7.1.8. Port of London Authority went on to emphasise the potential role riverbus services could play which would assist with achieving the scheme's aims. This would particularly be the case with regard to the bus rapid transport option which, combined with the proposed riverbus services can act as key transport interchanges for these the designated study areas, providing more transport options throughout the region and to/ from Central London and Canary Wharf.
- 7.1.9. Responses from all targeted stakeholders highlighted the need for continuous engagement with the project team when assessing and developing options for the study.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1.1. The results from the public consultation responses have informed the full assessment which also incorporates feedback from the technical stakeholder groups and will help to determine options to take forward.
- 8.1.2. An additional consultation will take place in Summer 2021 based on further refined options, to inform further appraisal and the case for investment in a preferred scheme, to be submitted to Government in Autumn 2021.

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