

HIGH SPEED TRAIN SERVICE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED *Kent Opened Up By High Speed Trains*

LONDON, 14 December 2009: Today saw the official launch of the UK's first domestic high speed service. The new high speed service operates from St Pancras International to Kent and is part of a fully integrated timetable in the South East, marking the biggest change in 40 years.

Transport Secretary, Andrew Adonis said, "These fantastic new services, made possible by the Government's investment in this £5.8bn high speed new line, are changing the transport map of Kent. Journey times have shrunk dramatically, bringing regeneration and new opportunities for investment.

"This shows the potential of high speed rail and we now must consider what it can do for the rest of the country."

The new service, which will see Hitachi-built trains operate at 140 mph along High Speed 1 (HS1), will dramatically reduce journey times across the region. Ashford International will now only take 37 minutes as compared to an average of 80 minutes on existing Mainline services. Towns and cities such as Canterbury and Folkestone will now be just an hour from London.

Charles Horton, managing director, Southeastern said, "Today marks the most important day in our franchise. We have been working hard since 2006 to achieve this goal. To be able to bring in the trains six months early as part of a preview service over the summer is testament to the teamwork we have put in with Hitachi, HS1 and Network Rail. The preview service proved a great success with passenger feedback exceeding what we could have hoped. This is a great day, not only for us but the industry, as we bring in the UK's first domestic high speed service."

The new timetable will also provide an extra 200 trains across the region and increase capacity on the network by 5%. The majority of passengers will see an improved service with stations such as Tunbridge Wells gaining an extra four services during the peak.

Alistair Dormer, Managing Director, Hitachi Rail Europe, said, "Today's introduction of the full service is the culmination of many hours of hard work by the whole Hitachi Rail team and of course our partners Southeastern, Network Rail and HS1. Delivering the trains on time, ready to run six months ahead of schedule is a great achievement for us. With the handover of the trains to Southeastern, our focus shifts to the maintenance work. Staff at our state-of-the-art depot in Ashford have used the preview service to plan and prepare our operations for this day. They are now ready to face the challenge of providing safe, clean, and reliable trains to

Southeastern and their passengers – and they are working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to achieve this.

Tim Smart, Director, High Speed 1, said: “Everyone involved in today’s celebration should feel extremely proud. The full launch of high speed domestic services marks another hugely significant milestone in the development of high speed rail in the UK. Together with our colleagues from Southeastern, Hitachi and Network Rail, High Speed 1 is again at the forefront of progress. We have proven that high speed rail works not only in terms of faster and more reliable journeys but in terms of fostering regeneration and economic development.”

For further details about the high speed service and the new timetable then please visit southeasternrailway.co.uk

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Fares as of 14 December

| | Peak return | Off-peak return | Monthly | Annual |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| Stratford high speed (HS) | £8.50 | £6.50 | £115.20 | £1,200 |
| Ebbsfleet (HS) | £24.20 | £12.50 | £316.10 | £3,292 |
| Ashford International | £40.60 | £20.60 | £362.90 | £3,780 |
| Ashford International (HS) | £48.70 | £24.90 | £435.50 | £4,536 |
| Canterbury West | £41.70 | £25.20 | £362.90 | £3,780 |
| Canterbury West (HS) | £49.80 | £26.00 | £435.00 | £4,536 |
| Ramsgate | £47.00 | £29.60 | £366.70 | £3,820 |
| Ramsgate (HS) | £55.10 | £29.40 | £439.30 | £4,576 |
| Folkestone Central | £44.40 | £24.60 | £364.80 | £3,880 |

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|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Folkestone Central (HS) | £52.50 | £28.70 | £437.40 | £4,556 |
| Gillingham | £26.20 | £14 | £290.00 | £3,020 |
| Gillingham (HS) | £31.60 | £16.70 | £360.00 | £3,752 |
| Faversham | £35.90 | £18.10 | £345.60 | £3,600 |
| Faversham (HS) | £41.30 | £20.80 | £415.90 | £4,332 |

About Southeastern:

Southeastern runs train services into London from Kent and East Sussex, operating some 2000 trains a day, carrying more than 400,000 passengers a day, serving 179 stations and covering 540-miles of railway infrastructure.

Southeastern is owned by Govia, a joint venture between the Go-Ahead Group (65 per cent) and Keolis (35 per cent).

Govia is the most enduring partnership between transport operators delivering rail franchises in this country.

It is the UK's busiest rail operator, responsible for 28.7 per cent of UK passenger rail journeys through its three rail companies, Southern, Southeastern and London Midland. Further information on Govia is available at: www.govia.info

Go-Ahead Group plc is one of the UK's leading providers of passenger transport services operating in the bus, rail and aviation services sectors.

Keolis is a French-based operator of transport services in Europe and Canada and is owned by AXA Private Equity, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, SNCF and Keolis management.

About Hitachi Rail Europe Ltd.

Hitachi Rail Europe Ltd., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hitachi Europe, Ltd. and is headquartered in London, UK.

Hitachi Rail Europe is a total railway system supplier offering rolling stock, traction equipment, signalling, traffic management systems, and maintenance depots.

Hitachi draws on many years of experience as a leading supplier of high-speed trains such as the Shinkansen (bullet train) for the Japanese and international markets. In Europe, Hitachi Rail Europe's first rolling stock contract was to deliver a fleet of 29 Class 395 trains, the first domestic high-speed train in the UK. The trains are maintained at Hitachi's state of the art depot in Ashford, Kent.

For more information about the company, please visit: www.Hitachirail-eu.com .

High Speed 1:

News Release

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High Speed 1, the UK's biggest ever construction project, is our first stretch of high speed rail, running from St Pancras International in central London to the mouth of the Channel Tunnel.

High Speed 1 is a highly engineered railway, delivered on time and within budget by London & Continental Railways. It was opened by The Queen in November 2007. Since that time it has carried the Eurostar international high speed train service and Southeastern's high speed 'Preview' domestic service. Independent studies have shown that the £5.8bn high speed railway is fostering up to £20bn in investment in regeneration, jobs, homes and commercial facilities at King's Cross Central, Stratford, Ebbsfleet, and all along the route.

www.highspeed1.com
www.stpancras.com