

Report To: Ashford Joint Transportation Board

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Report Title: Ashford International Station and Eurostar services

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<p>Summary: Report to update members on the project to enable new Eurostar trains to access Ashford International Station.</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the completion of the KVB signalling in March 2018 and launch of the new trains at Ashford International Station, complex technical issues have been identified which have meant that Eurostar have had to suspend the operation of their new Eurostar trains (Class 374) through Ashford until the cause of the technical issue could be identified and a solution implemented. Since its implementation, the KVB signalling system has operated without fault, being used daily by the Class 373 Eurostar trains and the Southeastern Class 395 Javelin trains.

2. Technical Issues at Ashford International Station

- 2.1 Following the identification of complex technical issues affecting the operation of the Class 374 Eurostar trains through Ashford, Eurostar, HS1, Network Rail, Network Rail (High Speed), the Office of Rail and Road, Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council have commissioned the detailed design of a track-side solution. A project team has been working to implement this solution within the budget provision of the original Ashford International Rail Connectivity project. This project is funded through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Local Growth Fund.
- 2.2 The technical issue occurred when the new Class 374 Eurostar trains crossed the AC/DC power interface coming off HS1 into Ashford International Station on the Ashford Spurs. A power spike at this point was damaging equipment on the Eurostar Class 374 trains and therefore needed to be resolved in order for these trains to be able to access Ashford. A contactor and train detection system has been designed that will resolve the power issue following options appraisal. The installation of the equipment has been commissioned, and the equipment has now been installed. Testing and commissioning of these works will take place in December 2019 ready for the re-introduction of the Class 374 Eurostar trains in January 2020. Once commissioning has taken place Eurostar

intends to timetable the re-introduction of the third daily Paris service to and from Ashford from the start of the summer timetable on 17 May 2020.

3. Eurostar Services

- 3.1 Continual discussions are being undertaken with Eurostar to ensure the current level of services are operated through to the commissioning of the new infrastructure in December 2019, which will then enable the introduction of Class 374 trains and the reintroduction of the third daily Paris service in 2020.

4.0 Next steps

- 4.1 The project team will continue to progress the commissioning of the current works and close out this project in the first quarter of 2020.
- 4.3 Once implemented, officers from Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council will continue to work with Eurostar to make the case for more frequent international services from Ashford International in the future.

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