

# More trains will create fast track to London

## SEVENOAKS MP

AS REGULAR readers will know, improving local train services has always been one of my top priorities and last month I wrote about the enhanced services on the Otford and Swanley fast line to Charing Cross, along with additional trains to Blackfriars, which begin on May 17.

Such has been the success of these improvements that I have consistently made the case to Southeastern: if they provide more trains, our residents will use them. I am therefore delighted that, from the December 2026 timetable change, Southeastern has agreed to a further upgrade to fast-line services between Otford, Swanley and London.

On weekdays there will be additional services to Charing Cross, increasing frequency to every 30 minutes from the start of service through to midday. Saturday services will also be strengthened at the busiest times, with two trains per hour to and from Charing Cross.

In addition, a half-hourly service

to Victoria will be reintroduced throughout the day on both weekdays and Saturdays – something I know many commuters will particularly welcome, and will mean for much of the day there will be four fast trains per hour into London.

There is also good news for Sevenoaks. From December, there will be six fast trains per hour throughout the day, along with an additional 16:58 service departing Cannon Street. I am especially pleased that Southeastern has addressed the 22-minute gap I previously highlighted after the 22:04 departure from Charing Cross, which will now be filled by a new 22:15 service.

Finally, Southeastern has reiterated that air-conditioned trains will be introduced on services starting and terminating at Tunbridge Wells – an important improvement in comfort for passengers and one I am personally very pleased with.

This is very positive news and I am grateful to Southeastern for listening to the concerns raised by local resi-

dents. However, as always, I will continue to press for further improvements wherever possible.

It remains deeply frustrating that Ebbsfleet International is still closed to international services. I have written to Eurostar on several occasions since becoming an MP, but they would not budge.

However, with proposals from Virgin to launch new services by 2030, and indications they may well be willing to consider stopping at Ebbsfleet and Ashford, I have this week written jointly with neighbouring MPs Tom Tugendhat and Mike Martin, requesting a meeting with Virgin to emphasise the case for international trains to once again stop in Kent. It is a complete nonsense that residents must travel into London, only to pass back through Kent on their journey to Europe and if we can put this right, it will be a huge benefit not only to residents, but also to businesses and the tourist industry.

