

Minister will publish date for Introduction of Long Overdue Train Service in New Year

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Tuesday, 15 December, 2020



At a roundtable meeting convened by Maidstone & The Weald MP Helen Grant on Monday 7th December, the Minister of State for Rail pledged to bring forward a reliable date for the delivery of the long-awaited City Thameslink Service from Maidstone East in early 2021.

The roundtable was attended by representatives from Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and local businesses. All in attendance explained to Minister Chris Heaton Harris how the service is so vital to Maidstone, with its potential to increase business investment, facilitate economic growth and provide improvements for Maidstone's many commuters.

Mr Heaton Harris said that he wanted to provide people and businesses in Maidstone with a date for delivery which they could trust. He explained that he therefore planned to convene a meeting between Thameslink, Network Rail and Department for Transport officials to thrash out the issues and agree a date by which the trains can start to run. He also plans to agree 'staging posts' with industry stakeholders which will allow all those involved to track progress towards the service being implemented.

Helen Grant said, 'I very much welcome this commitment from the Minister. Frankly, commuters and businesses in Maidstone have had enough of waiting for this long overdue service now. We all know that it will be a game changer for the County Town of Kent, unlocking substantial business investment and providing much needed new options for commuters.'

I would urge the Minister to bring forward a date for delivery as soon as he possibly can and then bang a few heads together to ensure that, this time, everybody sticks to it.'

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