



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Andrew Haines
Chief Executive
Network Rail
1 Eversholt Street
London
NW1 2DN

Our Ref: LT0136

13 February 2020

Dear Mr Haines

RE: MAIDSTONE EAST FAST SERVICE

We write to express our serious concern about the local railway network, and the further delays in implementing the Maidstone East fast service which will pass through the Otford and Swanley stations in the Sevenoaks constituency, and West Malling and Borough Green stations in the Tonbridge and Malling constituency.

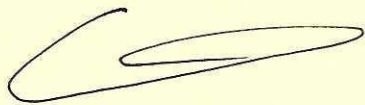
As you will be aware, the fast service had been promised for December 2018 and again by the Transport Secretary for December 2019 in October 2018. Many constituents and businesses have relocated to communities around each station on the line on the promise of faster and more frequent rail connections both into London and around Kent. The continued delay in the delivery of the service is disrupting vital links for employment, education and tourism.

The case for implementing the fast service is further enhanced by future capacity shortfall. Network Rail has already predicted a morning peak period shortfall of 4 train paths on the Kent mainline through Sevenoaks from 2022, but mainline capacity cannot be further increased until the fast service is introduced. The lack of capacity at present will worsen due to future housing development – both Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have already been tasked to build a large number of houses by 2035. In addition, at Borough Green there are plans for a garden village of over 3,000 new homes which has been identified because of its proximity to the railway station.

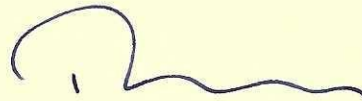
You have mentioned recently "a number of issues" that have held progress on the fast service back. This includes the delay in building the necessary infrastructure for the rolling stock which has already been delivered. We would be grateful if you could explain in more detail the nature of those issues, how quickly you anticipate them being resolved, and the steps you are taking to resolve them. Our constituents pay some of the highest train fares in the South East and deserve much better value for money than they currently receive.

We look forward to hearing back from you shortly.

With best wishes,



**LAURA TROTT MBE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
SEVENOAKS & SWANLEY**



**TOM TUGENDHAT MBE VR MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
TONBRIDGE & MALLING**