



**DR. CAROLINE LUCAS**

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**Green Party MEP  
for the South East of England**

Mr Richard Brown CEO  
Eurostar UK Ltd  
Eurostar House  
Waterloo Station  
London  
SE1 8SE

27th November 2006

Dear Mr Brown,

I am writing to you regarding the proposed cuts in the Eurostar services from Ashford International, and to express my concerns over the detrimental impact that these cuts stand to have on the socio-economic prosperity of the area, as well as on the environment.

I find it utterly absurd that Eurostar is to invest £100 million in the new station at Ebbsfleet, whilst the station built in Ashford at a cost of £80 million, just ten years ago, will see a drastic reduction in services. I appreciate that the opening of the new station at Ebbsfleet will be convenient for those living in certain areas of the South East, but the reduction of services originating in Ashford will cause great inconvenience for passengers from many parts of Kent and Sussex.

I note that in one of your recent speeches you mentioned the positive impact that high speed rail services can have in economically depressed areas. It is with this in mind that I am concerned over your plans to reduce services from Ashford. While Ashford is not classified as depressed, it is, as I am sure you are aware, being targeted by the government as one of the UK's 'growth areas', and has been earmarked for 30,000 extra homes. Taking this into account and the increase in future business that this growth stands to create for Eurostar, I do not understand why the company cannot continue to run frequent services from Ashford as well as incorporating Ebbsfleet into its network. This should be all the more possible considering that travelling times will be cut by 24 minutes upon the opening of the new line from St Pancras. Scheduling an extra stop at Ashford would add just 7 minutes to the journey time, representing a 17 minute gain on current timings. I find it difficult to accept that even those passengers favouring a direct service due to travelling time would choose an alternative method of transport if 7 minutes were added to their journey.

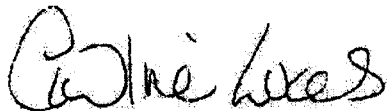
I do not need to point out to you that the maintenance and improvement of existing train services is vital as we face the increasing threat of climate change. The

possibility of a drastic decrease in services passing through Ashford would lead to an increase in car travel for those currently better served by Ashford needing to reach Ebbsfleet. It would also lead to an increase in air travel to the continent, which in no way is in line with our collective need and the government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions or tackling climate change.

I strongly urge you to take the needs of customers from across the country into consideration when finalising your future business plans regarding Ashford international.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Lucas'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Caroline Lucas MEP