

# Eurostar launches Ebbsfleet International and goes head-to-head with South East Airports

--Services begin on Monday 19 November - the fastest way to Europe

--Airline passengers can now switch to greener travel

--Eurostar travellers offered free connecting journeys on Southeastern train services

--Ebbsfleet United is first football club sponsored by a train operator

Eurostar, the high-speed passenger train operator that links the UK with the Continent, today announced that Ebbsfleet International station will open to travellers on Monday 19 November.

The new station is strategically located just off the M25 and will enable Eurostar to compete head-to-head with the South East's airports for the first time. Travellers who currently go by road to the airports will now have a clear choice: driving and flying, or driving and taking the far greener option of high-speed rail.

Ebbsfleet International sits at the heart of southern England, making it the fastest way to reach mainland Europe for a catchment of 10 million people. The station is closer to the motorway than any South East airport, and Eurostar will provide up to 2,500 parking spaces within five minutes' walk of the check-in gates.

Eurostar announced today that the parking charge at Ebbsfleet International will be £11.50/day – the same as at Ashford International and cheaper than at rival airports. Travellers in Business Premier and holders of Eurostar's frequent traveller card, Carte Blanche, will enjoy free parking for trips of up to four days at both stations.

Also unveiled today is a deal under which passengers will be able to travel free on any Southeastern train service to local rail stations near Ebbsfleet International or to Ashford International - simply by showing confirmation of their ticket and a passport. In addition, passengers will be offered free travel on the Fastrack bus service that connects local stations to Ebbsfleet, as well as Bluewater shopping centre. From Ebbsfleet travellers will be able to reach Paris in just over 2 hours and Brussels in 1hr 41mins. The opening of the new French high-speed rail line TGV Est this weekend (10 June 2007) will also make Ebbsfleet a gateway to Strasbourg, with a journey time of just over five hours, and other destinations in southern Germany. Ebbsfleet will also offer easy access to cities such as Amsterdam and Cologne - via a simple change at Brussels Midi.

There will be seven trains a day from Ebbsfleet International to Paris and five a day to Brussels, with Eurostar offering a frequency and punctuality that is significantly better than the airlines.

Besides becoming a gateway to cities across the Continent, the new station is expected to kick-start the development of Ebbsfleet Valley, part of the Kent Thameside regeneration area, creating a new residential and business centre of 40,000 people – the size of cities such as Winchester or Durham.

In addition to attracting passengers who currently fly, Ebbsfleet International will appeal to many thousands of Eurostar travellers living to the south of London who currently use Waterloo International, and who may prefer an alternative to [St Pancras International](#) when Eurostar switches operations to its new London terminal from 14 November.

Eurostar's Chief Executive, Richard Brown, said: "Ebbsfleet's strategic position means that for the first time Eurostar will not only challenge the airlines on customer service but also on location. For 10 million people across southern England, Ebbsfleet International will be the fastest way to Europe - much quicker than flying.

"From the M25 it will be easier to reach Ebbsfleet than any of London's airports, or free to get there via Southeastern rail services, and a far greener journey overall thanks to going by train instead of plane.

"Our travellers are telling us they want greener transport both to Paris and Brussels, and to destinations across the Continent. We want to help them cut their environmental impact further so we've made sure they can reach either of our international stations in Kent at no extra cost to themselves – thus making rail and bus connections significantly more attractive alternatives to the car."

Eurostar has also become the first train operator to sponsor a UK football club. It today unveiled a three-year deal with newly-renamed Ebbsfleet United FC, which plays in the Blue Square Premier (formerly the Nationwide Conference). Ebbsfleet United's ground lies within 400 metres of the station, and the club – nicknamed 'The Fleet' - last month changed its name from Gravesend & Northfleet FC to mark itself as a founding member of the new community.

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Editor's Notes:

1. Eurostar is the high-speed train service linking London, Ebbsfleet (from 19th November 2007), Ashford, Paris, Brussels, Lille, Calais, Disneyland Resort Paris, Avignon and the French Alps.

2. Eurostar will launch services from St Pancras International on 14th November 2007. Journey times on the UK's first high-speed line, High Speed 1, will be London – Paris 2h 15min; London – Brussels 1h 51min; and London - Lille 1h 20min. Journey times from Ebbsfleet International will be 10 minutes shorter.

3. Eurostar has set a target of reducing its carbon dioxide emissions by 25% per passenger journey by 2012. Independent research has already shown that a Eurostar journey between London and Paris / Brussels generates ten times less carbon dioxide than flying.

4. Eurostar has won the title of "World's Leading Rail Service" for the last nine years at the World Travel Awards.

5. Eurostar and Eurotunnel are separate companies, under different management and ownership. Eurostar operates high-speed passenger trains, while Eurotunnel operates a vehicle shuttle service and the Channel tunnel itself.

6. To book tickets for Eurostar, or to find out more information, go to [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com) , call 08705 186 186 or contact your travel agent.

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