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FASTRACK IS APPLAUDED WITH NATIONAL TRANSPORT AWARD

Fastrack, the bus rapid transit (BRT) system in North Kent, has scooped top prize in the bus category at the prestigious National Transport Awards. Announcing the award, the judging panel hailed *Fastrack's* "exciting and innovative approach in delivering a UK showcase bus project".

The award was presented last night at a ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Mayfair hosted by Dermot Murnaghan, presenter of BBC Breakfast News, and Baroness Ros Scott, Member of the House of Lords. Now in their 7th year, the National Transport Awards recognise and reward excellent transport delivery and service across the UK and Ireland and showcase best practice.

The award is further testament to the success that *Fastrack* has enjoyed over the 16 months since it was launched in March last year. Exceeding patronage estimates from the outset, *Fastrack* has now carried over 2.3 million passengers, with the vehicles having travelled some 800, 000 miles to date – the equivalent of more than three times the distance from the earth to the moon. There is also evidence that 19% of passengers have switched from using a car to *Fastrack* for local journeys, making it a credible alternative to the car.

Fastrack's significant role in the regeneration and development of Kent Thameside as well as its planned phased delivery ahead of the major new developments it will serve in the area over the next 30 years were praised by the judges. The *Fastrack* team was also commended for their innovative approach to successfully moving the project from concept into practice.

The award follows hot on the heels of the launch of *Fastrack's* new service, Route A, which started on June 3rd. Connecting the innovative Bridge Development and Crossways Business Park with Dartford, Greenhithe and Bluewater, this new route compliments the now well-established Route B service between Dartford and Gravesend. And *Fastrack* services will also serve the new Ebbsfleet International Station when Eurostar services commence in November this year.

Fastrack Project Manager David George said: "This award is a fitting accolade to the work of the whole project team over many years, lead by Kent County Council together with our wider partners. As well as being a showcase bus project *Fastrack* is driving forward and shaping development for the sustainable future of Kent Thameside and we are thrilled that this has been acknowledged. It has been a tremendous journey since *Fastrack* services began last March, but there is a lot more still to come as *Fastrack* expands and develops. So 'watch this space'!"



Receiving the award with David George, Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence, Roger Gough said: "We are delighted with the award for this project, which is exceeding expectations. By offering a genuine alternative, we have already managed to get almost 20% of the travelling public to make the shift from the car to *Fastrack*. The importance of Fastrack's contribution to the development of the wider Kent Thameside project cannot be underestimated."

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