HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Richard Branson
Virgin Trains
66 Porchester Road
London
W2 6ET

Reference No. HW67104 11 November 2025

Dear Sir Richard

I am writing on behalf of my constituents to welcome the approval of Virgin Trains to operate cross-Channel services using the Temple Mills depot in Leyton. This is an exciting and promising step towards restoring international travel from and to Kent.

It is vital that any new cross-Channel service stops at Ashford and Ebbsfleet stations in Kent. For years, those stations provided the county with direct access to Paris, Brussels and beyond. But since services stopped during the pandemic, Kent has felt the loss deeply. Many people and businesses moved to Kent because of the service and now find themselves questioning whether the promise they were sold still stands.

Virgin Trains has an opportunity to reshape cross-Channel travel again. Stopping at Kent offers an immediate, ready-made market: a population of over a million, eager to use these services from day one – as was done before the pandemic. The demand here in Kent is real and growing.

I would be very grateful if you could keep me informed as plans develop. If there are any obstacles slowing progress, please let me know. I would be delighted to support however I can.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Helen Whatelv MP