

New cross-London train route serving Herts and north east London travellers

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Transport Secretary and MP for Welwyn Hatfield Grant Shapps joined passengers at Welwyn Garden City station to welcome the start of new cross-London train services between the Hertfordshire town and Sevenoaks in Kent.

The new Thameslink services run every half-hour during weekday peak times.

Opening up the new route provides an increase in services with 2,600 more seats to London for passengers using Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Potters Bar, New Barnet, Oakleigh Park and New Southgate, as well as allowing their first direct through-London journeys.

Peak-time services from Finsbury Park to St Pancras International and through central-London are up from four to six trains per hour.

The new Herts-Kent route has been created by reinstating Welwyn-London services that were suspended in March 2020 and linking them, via St Pancras, to services between Blackfriars and Sevenoaks. The link forms the first-ever direct route across central London via Finsbury Park in the north and Elephant & Castle

in the south.

Thameslink's passengers benefit not only from the new direct journey opportunities to South London and Kent, but also from connections with the new Elizabeth line at Farringdon and easy changes at St Pancras or Blackfriars for trains to Gatwick Airport and Brighton.

Tom Moran, Managing Director for Thameslink and Great Northern, said: "We're delighted we can now provide these extra seats and new journey opportunities for Hertfordshire and Northeast London commuters. The new route is a key part of the service uplift we've achieved for our passengers in the new summer timetable introduced this week.

"This timetable is the starting point for rebuilding our railway, working closely with our community and industry partners to support passengers and the economic recovery of both local and regional rail."

Grant Shapps said: "Faster, more frequent services are what we all need. As our recovery from the pandemic continues, I'm delighted the Welwyn Garden City - Sevenoaks service is being introduced. This cross-London route will be vital to helping thousands of people travel across the region for work or play."