**London St. Pancras Highspeed announces new incentive scheme to grow international rail services**

* Significant financial incentives offered to encourage train operators to increase services to Europe
* Part of ambitious growth strategy to utilise 50 per cent spare capacity on the high-speed line
* Consultation launched today with scheme set to kick in on 30 May.

**London, 4 April 2025:** London St. Pancras Highspeed (the new trading name of HS1 Ltd) has unveiled a groundbreaking incentive scheme for new and existing international train operators to accelerate the growth of rail travel from London to Europe on the UK’s only high-speed railway.

The **International Growth Incentive Scheme** will encourage train operators to introduce new services, launch new destinations, connect intermediate stations, deploy new rolling stock and increase passenger volumes.

Train operators who qualify will be entitled to discounts of up to 50 per cent in year one, 40 per cent in year two and 30 per cent in year three on the Investment Recovery Charge (IRC) which is paid to run services on the line, plus an incentive to grow passenger volumes.

Currently the high-speed line which runs from London St. Pancras to the Channel Tunnel in Folkestone operates at 50% capacity.

London St. Pancras Highspeed wants to maximise the number of international services to drive growth, offer greater choice and lower fares to passengers, to increase sustainable tourism, and provide a valuable boost to the UK economy.

The International Growth Incentive Scheme is available to all international high-speed passenger service operators using and proposing to use the high-speed line and has two parts:

1. **New Services Incentive**, offering a discount on the IRC for new train services, launching new destinations and intermediate stations, and deploying new rolling stock.
2. **Passenger Incentive**, offering a rebate equivalent to £1 for every additional passenger carried above previous levels. This is to be paid into a joint fund to support marketing and other activities aimed at growing passenger demand.

The proposals come amid plans to more than double international passenger capacity at St. Pancras station to nearly 5,000 passengers per hour to accommodate the expected growth over the next decade and beyond.

**Robert Sinclair, CEO of London St. Pancras Highspeed, said**: “The International Growth Incentive Scheme is an innovative and groundbreaking proposal designed to boost international rail travel with more services to more destinations in Europe.

“We are enabling operators to expand their services, increase the network of destinations they serve and invest in new rolling stock.

“Our ambition is to make rail the preferred mode of travel to Europe, and we know that high-speed rail can reduce carbon emissions by up to 96% compared with flying.

“We believe this will boost the UK’s economic growth and contribute to our national effort to cut carbon.”

Public demand for international train travel is growing with 60% of Londoners\* supporting a ban on short-haul flights where high-speed rail alternatives exist.

London St. Pancras Highspeed recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurotunnel to work jointly on measures to reduce journey times, improve timetable coordination, and incentivise more trains and new routes.

The proposed International Growth Incentive Scheme has been published today for consultation with operators and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). The scheme is set to commence on Friday, 30 May, subject to the outcome of the consultation.

**-Ends-**

\*Hitachi Rail, 2024 – <https://www.hitachirail.com/better-connected/>

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**Notes to Editors**

* The consultation will be published on London St. Pancras Highspeed’s website on Friday 4th April and can be accessed here: <https://stpancras-highspeed.com/consultation/>
* The International Growth Incentive Scheme consultation will close on 7 May 2025.
* The incentives provided under the Scheme are available to an operator for three years. An operator may only access the incentives under the Scheme once.
* The benefits under the New Services Incentive are provided as a discount to the Investment Recovery Charge (IRC) on qualifying train paths above previous levels.
* Any discount under the New Services Incentive is calculated by reference to the number of train paths an operator books to deliver new international passenger services during its 3-year incentive period, with quarterly and annual reconciliations to adjust for timetable changes throughout that period.
* The New Services Incentive also includes a discount to commence international passenger services using the high-speed route to and from New Destinations, as well as New Intermediate Stations. This would incentivise stops at Stratford International, Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International.
* The Passenger Incentive offers a £1 rebate for passenger volumes above previous levels, which is payable into a joint fund to support marketing and other activities to grow passenger demand.
* The total amount of the incentive payable to a specific train operator under the scheme will depend on the level and nature of new services delivered and passenger growth above previous levels but could be in the order of £40 million to £60 million in total over three years.
* It is expected that the International Growth Incentive Scheme will be introduced following completion of the current consultation and ORR approval and will be available until 31st March 2035 unless amended or withdrawn earlier by London St. Pancras Highspeed in accordance with its terms.

**About London St. Pancras Highspeed**

London St. Pancras Highspeed owns and operates the UK’s only international high-speed rail link and the stations along the route – St. Pancras International, Stratford International, Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International – connecting London directly to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam.

This line supports £427m of economic benefits to UK and continental Europe every year, with cumulative benefits of £4.5bn since London St. Pancras Highspeed was handed the concession. London St. Pancras Highspeed has also reduced annual emissions equivalent to 60,000 short haul flights each year.

As part of the company’s Five Year Asset Management Plan, from 1st April 2025, charges to operate on the high-speed line will be reduced by 20% and station renewal charges by around 30%. This is separate to the incentive scheme announced today.

**-Ends-**