

Agenda Item 7.5

Subject: North Devon Line – Community Vision, Resilience and Station Priorities

Dear Clerk,

Following the recent Annual General Meeting of the North Devon Line Rail Promotion Group (NDLRPG), we are contacting town and parish councils along and near the Exeter–Barnstaple line to invite you to help shape a community-led vision for the future of the railway.

The North Devon Line is a vital lifeline for our region, connecting communities to jobs, education, healthcare and key services, as well as supporting tourism and the local economy. The recent closure caused by the River Taw being in spate and the associated risks to bridge structures has underlined how important it is to improve the resilience of the route.

We are also seeing very high levels of sixth form travel to Exeter College, with peak services often at or near capacity. While we welcome Great Western Railway's plans to introduce additional rolling stock from 2026, demand is already strong, and we need to continue campaigning for further investment, capacity and reliability improvements.

Our priorities are to:

Raise the profile of the North Devon Line

Seek additional funding to create a more resilient railway

Plan for future capacity enhancements through further infrastructure development

Make the case for the line to be recognised as critical infrastructure for North Devon

To do this well, we need to understand the needs and aspirations of your community. We would be very grateful for your council's views on:

Service needs (e.g. faster and more reliable trains to Exeter and beyond)

Additional calls at Lapford, Kings Nympton and Portsmouth Arms

Flood and climate resilience along the route

What you would like to see at your local station, such as:

Enhanced passenger facilities (shelters, lighting, CCTV, accessibility)

Better bus connectivity and interchange

Car parking and cycle provision

Improved real-time information and signage

We would be very happy to:

Receive a short written response following a council discussion, and/or

Attend one of your council meetings to share the key presentation from our AGM, explain the case for critical infrastructure status, and begin developing this community vision together.

If you are able to place this item on an upcoming agenda, or would like to arrange a presentation, please do let Peter Bunn (Secretary) or myself know.

We are looking to update our website with local information and if you wish to supply an item re your community we will include that on the site, see our current website: www.ndlrpg.org

With best wishes, David Northey **Chair, North Devon Line Rail Promotion Group (NDLRPG)**