

DEVON AND EXETER RAIL PROJECT WORKING PARTY

17 February 2017

Present:

Devon County Council:

Councillors B Hughes (Chairman), K Ball, P Bowden, A Eastman, R Julian, J Mathews, D Sellis, M Squires, N Way, R Westlake, R Younger-Ross and A Leadbetter

Exeter City Council

Councillor A Leadbetter

East Devon District Council

Councillor B Bailey, East Devon District Council

Councillor B Deed, Mid Devon District Council

Councillor Terry Snow, Mid Devon District Council

Councillor J Goodey, Teignbridge District Council

Councillor I Doggett, Torbay Council

Apologies:

Councillors F Biederman (Devon County Council), T Wardle (Exeter City Council), J Flynn and D Luggar (North Devon Council), R Prowse (Teignbridge District Council) and R Longhurst (East Devon District Council)

14 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2016 be signed as a correct record.

15 **Whimple Rail Users Group**

Professor R Betts spoke on behalf of the Whimple Rail Users Group expressing his thanks to the Working Party for their work and achievements thus far on the Whimple line. The Users Group were keen to see the good service continue and to work with and support the Working Party into the future.

16 **Update from Network Rail**

(Councillor Deed declared a personal interest in this item and all other items hereunder but did not speak by virtue of being in receipt of a pension from South West Trains.)

Mr D Northey, Senior Strategic Planner, gave a presentation covering, in particular:

- further Government funding of £10m for the proposed resilience scheme between Exeter and Newton Abbot;
- Exeter – Exmouth (Avocet line) and Crediton – Barnstaple (Tarka line) being key lines for improvement;
- faster journey times from the South West.

Matters discussed by Members with Mr Northey included:

- a long term strategy for climate change/flooding involving close working with the Environment Agency;
- initial work at Cowley Bridge involving additional drainage and removal of weirs;

- capacity issues and the need for additional rolling stock;
- North Devon/Tarka line – the need to encourage rail users especially businesses to participate in the current survey;
- rail freight forming part of long term strategy;
- safety concerns at Salmon Pool (Tarka line) and the need for installation of half barriers;
- Tavistock and the listed structure at Meldon – how to bridge the gap?;
- ongoing capacity issues at Coplestone and additional rolling stock;
- the state of the sea wall at Teignmouth; the effect on tourism if beach is affected and the need for wave-breaking reefs to be considered.

Mr Northey acknowledged the following issues and would report further on the:

- timescale/funding for flooding resilience at Cowley, Bridgwater, the Somerset levels and Axminster;
- timescale for installation of half barriers at Salmon Pool (Tarka line).

17 Update from Great Western Railway (GWR)

Mr L Ward, Regional Development Planning and Programme Manager, gave a presentation which covered:

- increased patronage on the Tarka/Avocet lines
- the new Intercity Express trains being tested;
- investing in the future of high speed services (Speed to the West);
- expanded car park at Tiverton Parkway;
- investment in station improvements;
- Exeter St David's Depot plans progressing;
- steady implementation of strategies – additional Crediton service in the pipeline;
- Okehampton – special charter train.

Matters discussed by Members with Mr Ward included:

- lack of bus flag and cycle shelter at Crediton Station;
- bridging the level crossing at Exeter;
- the date of an announcement from Government on Edginswell.

[NB A copy of the presentation given is appended to these Minutes.]

18 Update from South West Trains

Mr A Smy, Stakeholder and Community Rail Support Manager, presented an update which covered:

- changes to train services on the London Waterloo during the Summer of 2017 during the improvements (see also <https://www.southwesttrains.co.uk/globalassets/waterloo-south-west-upgrade---2017-leaflet.pdf>);
- additional carriages on the Tarka Line
- the expected announcement in early April on the new franchisee.

[NB A copy of the presentation on the Waterloo and South West Upgrade is appended to these Minutes.]

19 Update from Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership

Mr R Burningham, Manager, gave a presentation which covered:

- the core partners and aims of the Partnership;

- improvements at St Thomas and additional Sunday trains on the Avocet line;
- greater increase in numbers using the branch lines;
- the Partnership's website at www.greatscenicrailways.com

[NB A copy of the presentation given is appended to these Minutes.]

20 **Progress Report**

The Working Party considered the Report and presentation of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/17/11) on progress made by the County Council and rail project partners since its July 2016 meeting and further planned work in 2016/17 on the following ExeRail and other projects:

[NB A copy of the presentation is appended to these Minutes.]

21 **Next Meeting**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Working Party be held on Friday 14 July 2017 at 2pm.