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**West Devon
Borough
Council**

The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
LONDON SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: L/PS/NP

22 May 2014

Dear Secretary of State

Reinstatement of railway from Plymouth to Exeter via Tavistock and Okehampton as a complimentary route to the current southern Devon line

As you may recall I wrote to you on 5 March 2014 about the impact on the economy as a result of the damage to the main railway line into the peninsula at Dawlish. We are pleased that the repairs have now been completed.

Long term rail resilience remains a major concern and reinstatement of the railway between Plymouth and Exeter via Tavistock and Okehampton as a complimentary additional route to the southern Devon line would be beneficial for a number of reasons:

- Two routes, one east and south of Dartmoor and one to the north and west, would significantly improve the resilience of the rail network to the peninsula by providing an alternative complementary link
- The provision of a complementary northern route would spread the overall economic benefit generated by improved rail connections to central, northern and western Devon as well as north Cornwall. It is estimated that reinstatement of the former rail route could provide both mainline and local rail services to over 100,000 people who currently have extremely poor access to rail services
- Along the northern route much of the rail infrastructure either exists or there are plans in place to provide it, including private sector financial contributions, some of which will occur from proposed growth
- Investment in engineering improvements and rolling stock will enable improved travel opportunities, including the objective of securing significantly quicker travel times between the peninsula and other parts of the country along both southern and northern routes.

You may have had your attention drawn to work undertaken by the Peninsula Rail Group. I have attached a summary sheet of their findings for your information.



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Our Council believes it is time to improve the long term resilience of the rail network to the south west peninsula by investing in improvements to the existing South Devon route as well as reinstating the northern Dartmoor line to make a significant contribution to the economy of our area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Sanders', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Philip Sanders
Leader of the Council