

# Summary Sheet for Northern and Southern Rail Routes

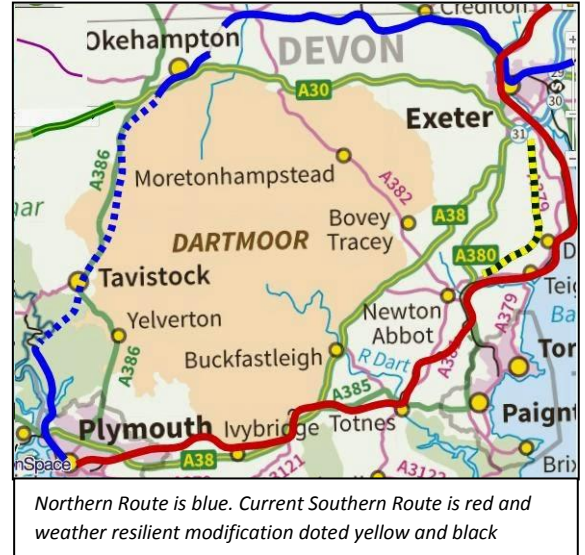
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## Aim of the PRG and the Data Sheet

We are a group of rail professionals, academics, rail enthusiasts, councillors and stakeholders. The aim of this Summary Sheet is to help ensure that the Dawlish Line rail debate is conducted based on authoritative facts.

## Background

The South West has been starved of rail investment since the 60s. This has not just been due to lower population levels but to a funding bias. London currently spends £774 per head of population, the North West £337 and South West just £212. This has created at least two major problems. Firstly when the Northern Route main line was closed in 1968 the region was left with a single weather dependent main line running along the South Coast through Dawlish. When closed in bad weather it cuts off 750,000 people in Plymouth and Cornwall costing approx. £2 million a day. Secondly, since the 60s closures, around **100,000 people** in Central and West Devon and North Cornwall have had no accessible rail service at all. When combined with a limited road network, this has severely constrained both business and tourist development in the region. This funding bias has to end if the region's rail infra-structure is to be restored. As a perspective the HS2 contingency fund is £7.5 billion. An additional Peninsula line could cost £0.3 to £0.7 billion



## South Dartmoor Route (One rail route solution - **excluding** Dawlish Warren)

Several rail routes though Newton Abbot have been considered since the 1930s. They not only provide a solution to the line's resilience but faster journey times. Cost estimations are between £600 million to £2 billion.

### Pros

- Provides a weather resilient service
- Estimates suggested journey times between Plymouth Exeter could reduce from **58 to approx 50 minutes**

### Cons

- Several times more expensive than the Northern route
- Much slower to implement as the line requires tunnelling and would have to be built from scratch
- 100,000 people in West Devon and North Cornwall remain without rail services.

## North Dartmoor Route (Two rail route solution - **including** Dawlish Warren)

Dr Beeching considered the Northern Route viable but it was closed for political reasons in 1968. Potentially it could be reinstated, some speed restricting curves optimized, to provide approx 53 min journey time\* between Plymouth and Exeter. Most of the ground works for a two track mainline exist. Reinstatement estimates vary from £200 to £450 million. The assumption is that the Dawlish line would remain to serve the coastal populations and build crucial future the rail capacity for the Peninsula.

### Pros

- Provides a weather resilient service - plus creates important extra mainline passenger capacity
- Estimates suggested journey times between Plymouth Exeter would reduce **to approx. 53 minutes\***
- It is substantially the cheapest option and also generates additional ticket sales revenue for train operators

- It would be substantially quicker to reinstate as much of the basic mainline infra-structure still exists
- Restores a rail service to 100,000 people - plus reinstates important local rail services along the route
- Eases road congestion into both Exeter and Plymouth - especially at rush hour times
- Provides substantial business and tourism benefits to areas needing economic support

## Cons

- Up to 4 minutes longer travel times depending on the level of track optimisation and rolling stock adopted

\* This would be for 'through' London or one stop services running on mainline track using Voyagers. (In 1967 diesels took up to 90 minutes due to 60s technology, stops, manual signalling and 40mph track restrictions) Future local train services also would have longer travel times.

## Appendix – You don't need to read this but may find it interesting!

*Quote from the Prime Minister..... When David Cameron was criticised for holidaying in Ibiza during a crisis he correctly responded with words to the effect that it was 'quicker to return to London from Ibiza than from Cornwall.' True but shameful!*

### Capacity and the need for future proofing the South West Peninsula rail network

Rail usage nationwide is expected to double within the next 10 to 20 years. Adding the Northern Route to the current Dawlish line would double rail capacity into the region, so future proofing the Peninsula's rail network for several decades. (Additionally in the future, Okehampton could be developed into a rail hub for reopened lines to Central and North Cornwall.) Further benefits would include an immediate reduction in road congestion in the Exeter & Plymouth rush hours and peak holiday periods and opening up important new consumer and business hinterlands around Plymouth, Exeter and Okehampton.

### Time and Speed

Currently the fastest services between Exeter and Plymouth via Dawlish take 58 minutes. Modern Voyager Trains running on modern main line track on a speed optimised reinstated Northern route with would reduce this to approx. 53 minutes. If a Southern Route were adopted these times could be reduced by a further 2 to 3 minutes to approx. 50 minutes – although at the cost of halving the future potential rail capacity and eliminating economic benefits of reopening the additional Northern Route. If in the future either of these routes were electrified both these times could drop again to between 40 to 45 minutes. Obviously it is assumed that both routes would run normal through trains to London and other destinations without the need to change trains at Exeter.

### Tourism in West Devon

Dartmoor National Park has long been a major tourist attraction. The proposed Northern Dartmoor route would encourage more visitors not only to Dartmoor but to the other parts of West Devon which also has many attractions further in land. Both Tavistock, Okehampton and surrounding areas offer the tourist a distinctive holiday destinations. A relatively few tourists use West Devon as a holiday venue, however the reinstatement of the line gives the opportunity to increase tourism and develop a stronger economy.

### Transport Sustainability

In order to deliver a sustainable transport system for the future we must invest in an efficient public transport system which provides access to work, education, goods and services, friends and family; and at the same time reduces environmental impacts and traffic congestion. Many people in Devon and Cornwall are at risk of being cut off from work and leisure activities due to the high cost of motoring and poor public transport. We have to get our £212 per capita rail investment up to a level comparable with the rest of the UK.

For more information or to make a contribution email [info@2day.ws](mailto:info@2day.ws), click [www.prg.2day.ws](http://www.prg.2day.ws) or call 01822 860148