
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2021 14:55
To: Planning Policy <PlanningPolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk>
Subject: Government Support Grant for Local Branch Lines.

Dear Sir or Madam,

From the age of five I was introduced by my parents to the county of Devon, in their early days of their marriage first discovered Littleham, Sandy Bay as a farm then owned by the Leigh Family who allowed similar couples to pitch their tents in an entrance field to the Farm. This was in the early nineteen thirties, and since I became an addition to the family many summer holidays followed from 1954 to the early sixties when it became a caravan park. In those days it took seven hours of driving in old pre-war cars, chugging up Yarcom Hill on the A30 from Hertforshire, and many more driving from the Midlands and further afield. Therefore when a neighbour camper arrived safely this was considered a journey from Mars and a real achievement and got much applause!

During this time Devon was not the sanitised place it has become, though it is still very beautiful, but then it had high hedged lanes instead of roads, and Metal Milk Urns sitting on wooden collection jetties at each Farm gate entrance.

These days in old age I travel by curtesy of Google, virtual reality maps, to visit those same places and roads to make comparisons with once virgin countryside vistas, the difference being startling with rapid huge urban and industrial park developments everywhere, and this is particularly true of Exmouth with its deep water harbour area once inhabited by poor fishermen living in corrugated cottages, now the play area of the rich in their super luxury multi coloured apartments overlooking the only visable remnant of the past, the harbour, where large coal ships once off loaded before sailing on to other port destinations around Britain and to London.

To this picture pen I must include the railway branch lines that once served this port along the 'Jurassic Coastline' I once travelled on, up the Otter Valley via Littleham Station, Budleigh, East Budleigh, Newton Poppleford, Tipton St Johns, Ottery St Mary. to Sidmouth Junction. This branch line also served Sidmouth, the line diverging at Tipton St Johns. Well this railway infrastructure was a massive Victorian visionary engineering achievement that opened up the county initially to Commerce and Tourism for the first time, which has driven the expansion I have described above ever since, though the demise of this line occurred 54 years ago under the 'Beeching Branch Line Closure Act'.

Of course, as with all supply and demand, things will appear and disappear and I have lived long enough to have witnessed this. But in successful local economies some branch lines have not always been a total victim to this process, in fact completely the reverse!

When I met Lord Beeching in my executive capacity at the Board of Ordnance in the 70's, he expressed to me his deep regret that the government he was then Transport Minister of, did not chose to adopt his lesser pruning of the rail networks, which would not have seen permanent closure of many branch lines especially the East Devon Branch line since this was one we discussed.

Since then the political landscape and fortunes of the country and economy have veered in one direction or another but, ultimately we are all now faced with a global catastrophe of 'Global Warming' and a new era of scarce finite resources that demand we conserve and use these as efficiently as possible whilst protecting the ecology that sustains our ability to use them. Therefore urgent remedial action is necessary to counter these threats to our very existence. World Governments have therefore sets targets to be achieved for by 2040-50.

After speaking with Simon Jump your member for Parliament recently who enthusiastically supports my views, I have been kindly directed to look at your county plan and, admirable as it is, I see no proper 'Integrated Public Transport System' in this plan which hitherto has always been treated as an after thought by planners. Therefore I would like to respectfully add just a few points (as an outsider) to your New County Plan perhaps others may have put forward who do qualify to contribute as constituency members or, if they haven't you may wish to consider and incorporate in your survey for discussion.

In your guidance notes at (11.3) you mention 2/3rds of public journeys are (to work), and that due to the rural nature of the landscape most employment clusters around major towns

with journeys (little more than two miles). If 2/3ds of these journeys are by car then with emission targets set by 2030 this is a major source of concern, since new technology car prices are never going to be affordable any time soon for the younger generation considering mass unemployment will get worse until perhaps new industries takes hold at vastly lower wage levels. To this problem one must also consider the expanding older generation, who may no longer be able to earn due to age health impediments.

Therefore this suggests a cheap, clean, fast reliable public train service is the (universal answer) to this problem, since the government also edicts an end to the reliance on old fleets of road haulage vehicles if pollution targets are to be met. Therefore the take up rate is likely to be very slow by road hauliers considering the massive investment necessary needs to be very fast by 2030, while motorways are already congested as fast as they are expanded.

Therefore an efficient electrified rail service is the answer especially for passenger service, as Bus and Coach companies will need to do the same as haulage companies (with the added problem of an 'Ageing Population' presents) who cannot negotiate narrow bus platforms especially with disabilities, which is not a problem with modern railway carriages, that have wide doors and level platforms and lifts to solve this problem. Also, with modern fully automated container ports around the country, road haulage is no longer necessary as massive dock lifts put containers from around the globe, like the new London Docks do, straight onto the main rail for national distribution, thus vastly reducing the time and energy road haulage took.

It would therefore seem to me obvious that under the governments new £500 million transport improvement scheme to reinstate as far as possible old derelict branch lines this is the answer (which also links up with national rail networks). Therefore this can be achieved for East Devon by resurrecting the line down the Ottery Valley from Sidmouth Junction all stations along this coastal route to a new terminus (Capel Lane) Littleham, Exmouth, where the vast area between the Salterton Road and Littleham road has seen in the past few decades massive expansion of new urban development and industrial parks and 'Tourism' to Sandy Bay where thousands take their holidays each year from all over the UK. I hardly need point out either that other resorts will benefit as last years travel restrictions abroad due to Covid-19 saw revitalised interest in British coastal 'Tourism' with record bookings now a reality due to 'Global Warming' coincidentally. By the way, there is a massive 'Volunteer Movement' that has opened up Canal, and Rail systems that would happily work on your scheme should it get approval.

I leave a lot for you to consider but, there's never been a better time to show the same vision your Victorian predecessors did in introducing the railways so squandered in the 60's but, offers once again a prosperous clean energy efficient future.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr Bren Calver



