

West Devon Borough Council  
Kilworthy Park  
Drake Road  
Tavistock  
Devon  
PL19 0BZ

76 West Garth Road  
Exeter  
EX4 5AW  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Planning application - 0425/17/FUL**

Railfuture objects to the proposal to build 7 new houses at Beeches Tavistock, **LA REF (Planning Application ID): 0425/17/FUL (170425)**. These would lie on the disused section of the second railway route from Exeter to Plymouth via Okehampton and Tavistock.

The line via Okehampton and Tavistock is needed as an alternative to the main route, particularly at times when the line via Dawlish is disrupted by the sea or is being repaired and renewed. In the future the Okehampton route will be needed to provide additional rail capacity between Exeter and Plymouth and is essential for the development of local rail services in the Exeter area. It would also improve transport links to and through West Devon. Building houses in the cutting at Beeches would artificially inflate the land value and in turn increase the railway reinstatement cost relating to compulsory purchase and demolition of the new houses.

In the short term it may be that only the Bere Alston to Tavistock railway will be reinstated for a commuter passenger service to and from Plymouth. In this case the station might be placed on the south of the Callington Road and so give the proposed houses a few years life.

However, the steep 1 in 75 gradient of the track bed south of Callington Road will make it difficult to provide a station that is safe for terminating trains. One solution would be to level a short section of the track bed for a station platform on the north side of Callington Road and within the Crease Lane cutting. Alternatively the railway could be extended on from Crease Lane to the centre of Tavistock, either to the old station site or a new platform on the south side of the Bannawell Street viaduct. Both options would be suitable for terminating trains. In addition from either location, it is only a 4 to 5 minute walk down to the centre of Tavistock compared to a 15 to 18 minute walk from Callington Road. Both these options would require restoration of the railway through the Crease Lane cutting.

The need for the Okehampton – Tavistock railway route has been established for many years. It was included in our national Campaign leaflet 'Bring Back Our Tracks' and with a cover photo taken from the Crease Lane overbridge. In our March 2000 Rail Strategy we further outlined the case for the Okehampton route, 'South West Rail Strategy : a discussion document' and published under the Railway Development Society name. Dewey: 307.12 ; Dewey: 658. The railway reopening has now gained a lot of additional support including from MPs and the Peninsula Rail Task Force.

In conclusion Railfuture requests that the planning application is rejected.

Yours faithfully,

Gerard Duddridge (Chairman Railfuture Devon and Cornwall)

Exeter

P.S. Could we please be kept informed on planning matters relating to the railway. We learnt of the planning application by chance through the letters page of the Western Morning News on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

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