



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance  
FAO: Roger Blake and Tim Steer

Our Ref: IR17711

8 July 2026

Dear Roger and Tim,

Please extend my thanks to the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance, and all the stakeholder organisations meeting again this Thursday to give North Devon's Rail Tarka Line the attention it deserves.

I read *Network Rail's: Transforming the North Devon Line* with great interest, and I appreciate the very clear statement that a train service on which passengers can depend will simply be “unsustainable” without interventions to improve the capacity and resilience of the Tarka Line itself.

Sadly earlier this week I received another very difficult email from one of my constituents: a local woman who had caught four trains from Barnstaple to Exeter in the past two weeks.

She was still too angry to explain the full story - but all four trains had faced delays of more than an hour, impacting this woman's education, and clearly making everyday life much more difficult than it should be.

Since we last met at Eggesford in March, it seems the ranks of local organisations and representatives supporting this effort have only grown stronger.

Ahead of a new capital investment round from Spring 2028, a plan is needed that shows passengers across Northern Devon that we believe strongly in public rail for the public good.

Network Rail's Summary of Potential Infrastructure Enhancements offers a shopping list of potential improvements between Barnstaple and Exeter, and suggests a phased programme may be more realistic.

Can I urge everybody in the room to be clear-eyed about this: focusing on what will make a genuine difference to passengers, in a timeframe they will see. We need a real plan that can be both paid for, and delivered.

Unfortunately my upcoming meeting with the Minister of State for Rail, Lord Hendy, had to be re-arranged following the recent rail crash in Bedfordshire - I still expect to speak with him over the coming weeks and ,make the case for North Devon's vital rail link with Exeter.

The previously empty site next to Barnstaple Railway station, that I spoke about in March, is no longer empty: the first structures of nearly new 200 new homes are already up. More passenger demand is coming down the line.

Please pass on my apologies that I am not able to attend in Exeter in person, and I hope to join you again soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Roome". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Ian Roome

Member of Parliament for North Devon