



## Local residents urged to have their say on Tarka Line rail services

Local residents are being encouraged to have their say on rail services to help with planning the future development of the Tarka Line, the railway which links Barnstaple, Crediton and Exeter.

As well as current rail users, organisers are particularly keen to hear from those who rarely, if ever, use the trains and people who live in Barnstaple, Crediton or one of the villages served by the line and use Tiverton Parkway or another station in preference to the one most local to them.

People are being asked to complete an online survey available at [www.northdevonsurvey.com](http://www.northdevonsurvey.com). For those without access to a computer, hard copies of the survey are also available at Barnstaple station, Crediton Station Tea Rooms and Barnstaple and Crediton Libraries.

The survey results will feed into the work of the North Devon Line Strategy Group which includes representatives of Devon County Council, North Devon Council, Great Western Railway, Network Rail, the Tarka Rail Association and the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership.

The Tarka Line has seen a huge increase in the number of people using it over the last few years. In 2015, 664,711 journeys were made on the line, well over double the 250,102 journeys seen ten years before, in 2005, and more than triple the 199,295 journeys seen in 2001, the first year for which figures are available. There has been a near 50% increase in just the last five years, 446,795 journeys being recorded in 2010.

More trains, more seats and improved coaches are planned over the next three years, with a full weekday hourly service being introduced in December 2018 and the existing trains being replaced by refurbished air-conditioned ones, with tables and on-train wi-fi, from mid 2018 onwards.

The Strategy Group is drawing up short, medium and long term plans for the line, making the most of the planned improvements in the short and medium term and looking ahead to investment needs and how they might be funded over particularly the medium and longer term.

North Devon Council Executive Member for Regeneration, Councillor Pat Barker, said: "The Tarka Line is a vital piece of transport infrastructure that supports the North Devon economy. Since 2001 there has been an increase of over 300% in ticket sales proving how vital it is. We are excited to be working with Network Rail, GWR and other stakeholders to secure more significant investment in the line."

Dan Okey, Regional Development Manager (West) for Great Western Railway, said “Great Western Railway is proud to support the communities we serve. The Barnstaple – Exeter Line has been a huge success over the last ten to fifteen years and further big improvements are planned from December 2018. The results of this survey will help direct all our efforts in making the best of these improvements and to look to the future in terms of what should be the next steps for the line.”

Richard Burningham, Manager of the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, which works to promote the Tarka Line and other branch lines across the two counties, said “I hope we get a lot of people taking part in the survey. We’re looking to get a very good range of views from across North Devon and along the line and people taking just a few minutes to complete the survey will be a big help in the future development of the Tarka Line.”

ENDS

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