



Department
for Transport



Tavistock to Plymouth

Restoring Your Railway: Ideas Fund Application

Contents

1. Explanatory notes	3
2. Key details	4
3. Bid summary	4
4. Financial overview of the proposal	8
5. Strategic overview of the proposal	9
6. Socio-economic benefits of the project	19
7. Project deliverability	24
8. Maps of your proposed project	27
9. Additional information request	29
10. Checklist	29

Confidentiality and data protection

This application, and the processing of personal data that it entails, is necessary for the exercise of our functions as a government department. If your answers contain any information that allows you to be identified, DfT will, under data protection law, be the Controller for this information.

As part of this application process we are asking for your name and email address. This is in case we need to ask you follow-up questions about your application. You do not have to give us this personal information. If you do provide it, we will use it only for the purpose of asking follow-up questions.

DfT's privacy policy has more information about your rights in relation to your personal data, how to complain and how to contact the Data Protection Officer. You can view it at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/about/personal-information-charter>.

To receive this information by telephone or post, contact us on 0300 330 3000 or write to Data Protection Officer, Department for Transport, Ashdown House, Sedlescombe Road North, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 7GA.

Your information will be kept securely by the Restoring Your Railway team and destroyed within 12 months after the deadline has expired.

1. Explanatory notes

The Ideas Fund (IF) is part of the Restoring your Railway (RYR) Programme. The Department for Transport (DfT) will fund 75% of costs, up to £50,000, of successful bids to help fund transport and economic studies and create a business case. Bids to expand access to the rail network can include the reopening of closed lines as well as the restoration of passenger services on routes which are currently freight-only.

This application form includes questions designed to help you provide the relevant information so we can assess your bid, but it is not exhaustive. Please make sure you include detailed information about the socio-economic benefits of the bid, the services that would be provided, and details of any known anticipated infrastructure and operating costs.

We ask that you do not use other formats. We recommend the response be between 15 - 20 pages in total. All key information should be included through responding to the questions below, however supporting evidence can be referenced and submitted as supplementary documentation. Please do not enter personal information within these boxes which would make an individual identifiable.

If you are submitting more than one bid, please indicate the priority order for your proposals.

If you have any queries, please contact the Restoring Your Railway team at restoringyourrailway@dft.gov.uk.

2. Key details

Please provide the following information:

Lead promoter (name, organisation and email address)	Jamie Hulland Devon County Council (Email address redacted)
Sponsoring MP(s) (name, constituency and email address)	Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Cox QC MP Torridge and West Devon (Email address redacted)
*Impacted line/ Location	Tavistock to Plymouth (reinstatement of line between Tavistock & Bere Alston and provision of services from Tavistock to Plymouth)
Amount of track reopened to passenger rail services, if applicable (to the nearest mile)	5 miles
Number of new stations proposed, if applicable (include site postcodes where possible)	Tavistock (PL19 8BJ)

*to be used in the publication of Ideas Fund bid detail on gov.uk

3. Bid summary

Provide a description of the proposed project; defining the intervention, service levels and/or infrastructure requirements. Where details (such as service frequencies) form part of the feasibility work required, please identify this in your response.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

The intervention

The proposed project encompasses:

- the reinstatement of the disused railway between Tavistock and Bere Alston, which was closed following the Beeching Report in May 1968;
- the reinstatement of rail services between Tavistock and Plymouth via Bere Alston and increased local service provision to St Budeaux, Keyham and Devonport in Plymouth;
- the opening of a new railway station at Tavistock.

The proposed project objectives will:

- Encourage modal shift for journeys between Tavistock, the largest town in West Devon, and Plymouth, the largest city in the South West Peninsula, addressing congestion on the A386 corridor and tackling the Climate Emergency;
- Facilitate local development, as laid out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP);

- Enhance access to employment, education and healthcare in Plymouth for residents of Tavistock and the surrounding West Devon and North Cornwall area; and
- Provide a step-change in rail services for extremely deprived communities in the Plymouth suburbs of St Budeaux and Devonport, improving access to the Dartmoor National Park and to the wider rail network (via interchange at Plymouth).

A 'plan on a page' of the project is included in Appendix 1.

The scheme is supported by various policies within plans including:

- The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan;
- The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan;
- The Peninsula Rail Task Force's Strategic Rail Blueprint; and
- The Interim Devon Carbon Plan.

As shown in Table 1, this will form the first phase of a joint vision for Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, GWR and Network Rail (NR) to improve rail connectivity and services into Plymouth from the South West Devon travel to work area, with subsequent phases encompassing:

- Service extensions to Ivybridge, to serve an existing Park & Ride site; and
- Re-opening of Plympton station.

Core Project	Future Phases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reopening of Tavistock to Bere Alston section with new station • Bere Alston signalling upgrade • Hourly services between Tavistock and Plymouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of services to Ivybridge, supported by new turnback facility • New station at Plympton

Table 1: Scope of this project and future phases

It is also a key 2nd phase of the Peninsula Rail Task Force's 20 year plan for the Northern Route between Plymouth and Exeter via Tavistock, which follows the committed reopening of the Okehampton to Exeter line.

The funding being sought through the Restoring Your Railway Fund will be used to update the extensive work previously conducted on this project and develop a Strategic Outlines Business Case for the proposed reopening. Devon County Council has already secured £11m in S106 funding for the subsequent construction of the proposed infrastructure.

Service levels

The services on the reinstated railway will operate between Tavistock and Plymouth, using the existing rail network between Bere Alston and Plymouth¹. These services will operate with an hourly frequency, with the existing frequencies to Gunnislake maintained, as summarised in Table 2 below.

¹ See Section 8 for a map illustrating how the proposed railway line would link to the existing rail network.

Station	Current Service Level (tph)	Proposed Service Level Uplift (tph)	Proposed Total Service Level (tph)
Tavistock	-	1	1
Gunnislake	0.5	-	0.5
Calstock	0.5	-	0.5
Bere Alston	0.5	1	1.5
Bere Ferrers	0.5	-	0.5
St Budeaux (Victoria Road)	0.5	1	1.5
Dockyard	0.5	-	0.5
Keyham	0.5	1	1.5
Devonport	0.5	1	1.5
Plymouth	0.5	1	1.5

Table 2: Proposed service levels (excluding longer-distance services).

The timetable and operating solution for this, including a signalling scheme sketches have been developed in partnership between NR and GWR to achieve the most efficient timetable operation for Tavistock and the Tamar Valley as a whole. This is the most cost effective solution and maximises the value of the existing rail asset, enabling both Devon and Cornwall rail objectives to be met.

Infrastructure requirements

Significant work has been undertaken to progress the scheme proposals up to GRIP2/3, including detailed consideration of the infrastructure requirements:

- **Station:** a new single-platform station will be constructed at Tavistock, with provisions to meet all relevant Network Rail and Train Operating Company requirements.
- **Track alignment:** the reinstated railway line will be single-track, utilising the disused formation from Bere Alston Junction towards Tavistock, and terminating some 400m south of Callington Road, Tavistock. The track alignment will run along the middle of the (formerly double-track) formation where practicable, but will move to the downhill side of cuttings where this reduces the risk of rockfall.
- **Line speed:** it is expected that a speed of 55mph could be achieved on this alignment, satisfying the operational requirements.
- **Structures:** most structures² on the proposed route are extant and in reasonable condition, however, one bridge needs replacing and a section of embankment needs reinstating.
- **Embankments:** initial assessment concluded that they meet stability requirements. A range of remedial measures are proposed to protect the railway, including the removal of loose or heavily-fractured rock pieces, rock netting, rockfall protection fencing and ditches.

² Maps of structures and embankments/cuttings on the proposed route are included in Appendix 2.

- **Drainage:** new track drainage will be provided in all cuttings, and toe drainage will also be provided in cuttings, on the side away from the track. Crest drainage will be provided above cuttings where practical. Drainage outfalls will be provided at the end of each cutting and at each underbridge.
- **Fencing:** post and wire fencing is required along the bottom of embankments and the top of cuttings to stop livestock and members of the public entering the rail line. Existing fencing will be upgraded and renewed as necessary. In high-risk areas, more robust fencing will be provided.
- **Land:** Approximately 85% of the land is in Devon County Council's ownership with provisional agreements in place and/or positive discussions with landowners for most of the remaining parcels of land.

Is the project already within the remit of Network Rail's management and control process for enhancements? If so, what stage is the project at? Has there been any other previous assessments of this proposal? What was the outcome? What has changed since previous reviews?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

This project is not currently in NR's management and control process for enhancements; however, Network Rail has previously supported the project through to GRIP2/3 stage before the project stalled due to lack of funding. This entailed developing Approval in Principle designs for most elements of the scheme, to meet Network Rail standards, following the carrying out of a Feasibility Study and Single Option Selection Report.

The Feasibility Study (October 2012) confirmed that reopening the railway was feasible, and that, apart from some reinstatement works, there were no known significant engineering obstacles. In general, the proposed route was found to be in good condition, based on a range of studies commissioned by Devon County Council (DCC), and initial structural assessments indicated that it would be suitable for the proposed service.

The Single Option Selection Report (April 2014) reaffirmed that the trackbed and most of the structures were in "fair to good condition". It proposed a single-track line between Bere Alston and Tavistock, with the additional infrastructure requirements including:

- New signalling at Bere Alston station;
- Remodelling of Bere Alston station, with the existing platform being extended and the disused island platform being refurbished, the latter being used by Gunnislake services;
- Provision of wireless communications along the route, in line with the Global System for Mobile Communications – Railway (GSM-R) standard; and
- Improvements to and replacement of structures, earthworks and drainage, as outlined above.

In 2015, the project was put on hold until more funding could be identified. Some of the existing work will need to be refreshed or reworked to bring them up to current standards, as detailed in a 2020 Approval in Principle Status Report. For example, the requirements for information and security systems at Bere Alston station will change in line with changes to the platform arrangements, and designs of culverts should be reviewed against current Environment Agency guidance on climate change.

The project was put forward under the 'accelerated proposals' of the Restoring Your Railway fund; however, was unsuccessful. Feedback from the DfT recognised that a lot of work had been progressed with the scheme but not sufficient to satisfy a Strategic Outline Business Case. The DfT encouraged a submission through the Ideas Fund and the early feedback has enabled us to meet this deadline. As part of the next stage of the development, the County Council will be reviewing all of the technical reports to ensure its robustness.

4. Financial overview of the proposal

Please provide details of the potential third party contribution for the work you are seeking to fund through the Ideas Fund. This should include the amount, the terms and percentage of the total costs. Please include any other relevant financial considerations, for example information on potential third party funding for the delivery of the project as a whole.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

The total cost of developing the project is anticipated to be £71k with £50k (70%) being sought from the Ideas Fund and £21k (30%) being a contribution from DCC.

Up to £11m of funding for the project delivery is to be provided via a S106 at Callington Road, Tavistock (750 homes)³, which is under construction and would be in close proximity to the new station.

What will the funding pay for? For example, to support further research to investigate potential benefits for local tourism or carry out a feasibility study on infrastructure changes to help support a subsequent SOBC.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

The funding will pay for the refreshing of previous studies and for the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). Dependent on the level of funding secured, this could include individual reports such as:

- Patronage Forecasts
- Economics Report
- Options Assessment Refresh
- Appraisal Specification Report

Are there any financial dependencies or risks in delivery of the work proposed to be funded through the Ideas Fund?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

DCC has a transportation engineering professional services framework, which would ensure adequate resource to deliver the project outputs, and local match funding is in place. Therefore, the work proposed to be funded through the Ideas Fund is considered to be deliverable and low-risk.

³ See Schedule 5 of the S106 Agreement, available at <http://apps.westdevon.gov.uk/planningsearchmvc/home/details/134353>.

The County Council has developed these proposals, working closely in partnership with GWR and NR. The project has many similarities with the successful Okehampton to Exeter Rail Line Reopening and we would therefore seek to apply Project Speed principles to the project.

5. Strategic overview of the proposal

Rationale for Intervention

Provide a high-level explanation of what your project aims to achieve, including a summary of the problems/opportunities the project looks to address, providing supporting evidence where appropriate. This should include consideration of how the project aligns with local and national policy. What is the transport problem? Have you considered other transport modes to deliver the outcomes and if so, why is rail the appropriate solution?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

Project Objectives

- 1. Encourage modal shift for journeys between Tavistock, the largest town in West Devon, and Plymouth, the largest city in the South West Peninsula, addressing congestion on the A386 corridor and tackling the Climate Emergency**

Plymouth is a key destination for commuting trips from Tavistock (Table 3), with nearly 1,000 Tavistock residents working in Plymouth (2011 Census).

Workplace	No. People	% of Workers	No. Car Commuters	Car Modal Split
Work from Home	725	14%	0	0%
Tavistock (not WFH)	1,929	38%	1,013	53%
Other West Devon	582	11%	513	88%
Plymouth	996	20%	883	89%
South Hams	170	3%	158	93%
Exeter	93	2%	86	92%
Other Devon & Torbay	122	2%	108	89%
Cornwall	340	7%	327	96%
Other UK	144	3%	104	72%
Total UK	5,101	100%	3,192	63%

Table 3: Travel to Work data for Tavistock residents (2011 Census)

Traffic flows on the A386 road corridor, which links the two settlements, typically exceed capacity during peak periods, with highly variable journey times. The road is primarily two-lane single carriageway and contains narrow sections with poor alignment and steep gradients, which create resilience and route reliability issues. The significant environmental constraints on the corridor, particularly within Dartmoor National Park, limits the scope for highway improvements. This also impacts on reliability of buses between Tavistock and Plymouth, which uses the A386 corridor. Bus journey times during the peaks are up to 20 minutes greater than the off-peak and other sustainable modes (walking, cycling) are infeasible due to the distances involved.

2. Facilitate local development, as laid out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan

Significant development, including 750 dwellings adjacent to the disused railway, and residential and employment development in Plymouth, is allocated in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan⁴ (Figure 1). Additionally, a Freeport for Plymouth and South Devon was announced in the 2021 Budget, and is expected to begin operations from late 2021. This is expected to bring additional investment, trade and jobs to the area.



Figure 1: Tavistock Vision Diagram, from the Joint Local Plan. The proposed rail station and line is shown towards the bottom left of the picture.

However, this development would be expected to put further pressure on local transport networks, and without intervention, existing issues would be exacerbated.

3. Enhance access to employment, education and healthcare opportunities in Plymouth for residents of Tavistock and the surrounding West Devon and North Cornwall area

Tavistock is the largest settlement in West Devon, with a population of 12,500, and wider rural population of approximately 30,000, within the shopping and education catchment areas of Tavistock. Plymouth is the largest city in the Peninsula, and the west of Plymouth which the rail line will serve is a key regional economic centre, incorporating the UK's first marine Enterprise Zone (Oceansgate), Devonport Dockyard and the HM Naval Base.

⁴ See

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/planningandbuildingcontrol/plymouthandsouthwestdevonjointlocalplan>

However, there is currently no rail link between Tavistock and Plymouth, and there is no direct bus service between Tavistock and west Plymouth. Therefore, access to the various job opportunities available in Plymouth for residents of the Tavistock area without access to a car is limited.

4. Provide a step-change in rail services for extremely deprived communities in the Plymouth suburbs of St Budeaux and Devonport, improving access to the Dartmoor National Park and to the wider rail network (via interchange at Plymouth)

Plymouth as a whole and St Budeaux and Devonport in particular are areas of significant deprivation, as detailed further below.

The proposed project would treble the service frequency to St Budeaux (Victoria Road), Devonport and Keyham, as the existing Gunnislake-Plymouth services would be joined by hourly Tavistock-Plymouth services (see Appendix 1). The project would complement Plymouth City Council's St Budeaux Interchange scheme, being delivered through the Transforming Cities Fund, as it would deliver the improvement in service levels necessary to ensure the improved physical facilities increase the attractiveness of rail.

Alternative Options Assessment

An Options Assessment Report⁵ considered various options to address the transport-related issues discussed above. The report showed that a rail-based scheme is “overwhelmingly the most suitable, economic, feasible and effective scheme” and would support economic growth and housing development within Tavistock.

Light rail, tram-train or guided bus schemes would likely be undeliverable, due to high costs and delivery uncertainties, whilst highway improvements to the A386 corridor would have large adverse environmental impacts. Bus service frequencies are already high, at up to 4 buses per hour; it appears journey times are the predominant constraint on the attractiveness of the bus. Constructing bus lanes on the A386 corridor would have similar adverse environmental impacts and express/limited-stop bus services would be of limited use to those wishing to use intermediate stops.

Alignment with local and national policy

The proposal is aligned with numerous policies in the adopted JLP, including:

- SPT8 – Strategic Connectivity: “Supporting improvements to local rail connectivity and links between Tavistock and Plymouth”;
- PLY47 – Strategic infrastructure measures for the Derriford and Northern Corridor Growth Area: “Reopening the rail link between Tavistock and Plymouth, providing sustainable alternative travel for the entire A386 corridor from Tavistock to Plymouth”;
- SP5 – Spatial priorities for development in Tavistock: “Restoring the former rail link between Tavistock and Bere Alston... to provide a... sustainable transport alternative for journeys into and from Plymouth”

⁵ See <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/traffic-information/transport-planning/tavistock-to-bere-alston-railway-and-associated-multi-use-trails/>

The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan (LTP) includes the Tavistock railway as “an alternative mode and relief of congestion on the A386 corridor to enable new development”.

The Peninsula Rail Task Force⁶ identifies the reinstatement of rail between Tavistock and Bere Alton in its 20 year plan. It states:

“A phased development of rail links serving Exeter and Okehampton, and Plymouth and Tavistock will deliver improved travel to work connectivity with added tourism benefits for Dartmoor National Park and links to North Cornwall. As economic and housing market conditions allow, the opportunity for a full reopening of the ‘Northern’ route should be explored from Exeter to Plymouth via Okehampton.”

The Department for Transport’s publication *Investing in the South West*⁷ also recognises local aspirations for an Okehampton to Plymouth rail line.

DCC and West Devon Borough Council have declared a Climate Emergency, with the draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan highlighting the need to encourage “modal-shift to sustainable transport options”, which is a primary objective of this proposal.

What impact might the project have on levelling up outcomes?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

The Government’s commitment to levelling up the whole of the UK’s economy aims to ensure all communities can benefit from future prosperity, focusing on improving everyday life for millions of people and that no community is left behind. Plymouth and West Devon have been placed in the 2nd priority category for Levelling Up nationally. Both places have a demonstrable need for economic growth, improved transport connectivity and regeneration.

West Devon currently ranks 6th from bottom in the whole of Great Britain on workplace earnings⁸. Tavistock North East is currently in the most deprived one third of areas in England and the most deprived 18% of areas in England in terms of employment^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}. Furthermore, several neighbourhoods (Lower-Layer Super Output Areas) in Tavistock are among the most deprived third of areas in England in terms of geographical barriers to housing and services, with one neighbourhood among the most deprived 11% nationally. Figure 2 shows that, under this measure, the rural hinterlands surrounding Tavistock are even more deprived, with West Devon being ranked 90th most deprived of 317 lower-tier authorities for the ‘Barriers to housing and services’ domain.

⁶ Peninsula Rail Task Force comprises the 5 local transport authorities of Cornwall Council, Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council, Torbay Council and Somerset County Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and Heart of the South West LEPs

⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/investing-in-the-south-west>

⁸ ONS – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2020, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours>

Indices of Deprivation: 2019 and 2015

Switch domain to: IMD   
Viewing **Barriers to Housing and Services Domain**

2019 map **On**

2015 map **Off**

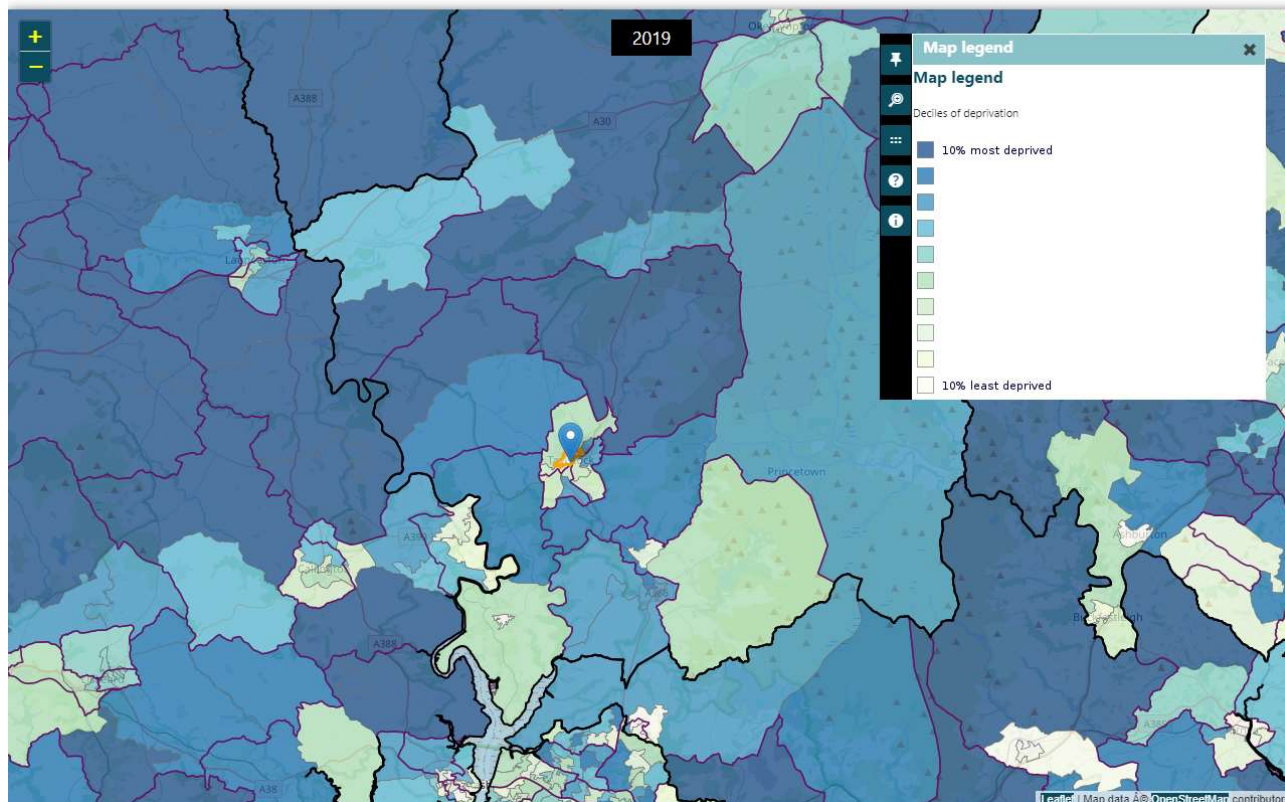


Figure 2: Barriers to Housing and Services in area around Tavistock (represented by the blue pin), according to English Indices of Deprivation 2019⁹.

Plymouth suffers from significant deprivation, ranking 72nd highest of 317 local authorities according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation⁹. Furthermore, as shown by the maps in Appendix 3, St Budeaux and Devonport, suburbs on the western edge of Plymouth located along the rail line, are especially deprived in terms of education, employment, income and access to cars.

The proposed trebling of service frequencies to St Budeaux (Victoria Road), Devonport and Keyham, would be expected to significantly reduce this deprivation, as, for instance, it would enable residents of these areas to more easily access employment, education and key services. Additionally, as the average 'interchange penalty' for passengers changing from suburban (Gunnislake/Tavistock-Plymouth) to inter-city services at Plymouth would significantly reduce, St Budeaux and Devonport residents' access to opportunities further afield, e.g. in Newton Abbot and Exeter, would be vastly improved.

Western Plymouth represents a significant, highly-skilled and well-paid job market, including Devonport Dockyard (6,000 employees) and the Oceansgate Enterprise Zone. However, the area has poor accessibility by public transport. Improvements to the rail network between Tavistock and Plymouth will give rise to a boost in sustainable travel options via the suburban stations and improve accessibility to the Naval Base and Babcock (Keyham and Dockyard Stations) and Oceansgate (Devonport Station). By reducing transport-related barriers to employment and services located in Plymouth, this

⁹ English Indices of Deprivation 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

project would be expected to significantly reduce deprivation levels in and around Tavistock and provide business and employability benefits within Plymouth.

The project is also likely to increase both the size of the market and footfall for businesses in Tavistock and the surrounding area, helping to improve business sustainability and growth prospects in terms of local employment.

What would be the impact if this project was not taken forward?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

The proposals have long been an ambition of the South West Peninsula and are embedded in a range of local policies (Local Plan, PRTF, Local Transport Plan) and have strong political support from MPs covering a wide geographic area in the South West.

If this project was not taken forward, transport links between Tavistock and Plymouth would continue to be constrained by congestion and road safety issues on the A386 corridor. As well as local growth within Tavistock, there is significant growth planned on Plymouth's northern corridor which would exacerbate existing congestion and lengthen journey times. Development may stall due to the constraints on the transport network reducing the attractiveness of northern Plymouth and Tavistock as a place to live and work, in turn reducing the viability of housing and employment development in the area. This latter outcome would impair local planning authorities' ability to implement policies from the Joint Local Plan. The competitiveness of the local economy and accessibility of local firms to potential customers and employees would be reduced.

Furthermore, as set out in the Options Assessment Report⁵, alternative options for improving sustainable travel in the area are limited, and would likely be significantly poorer value for money. Accordingly, if this proposal is not taken forward, the private car is likely to remain the most attractive option for many journeys between Tavistock and Plymouth. This would cause congestion, air quality problems and traffic noise on the corridor to continue to increase, adversely impacting the local environment, and hindering progress towards addressing the Climate Emergency.

As Tavistock is a 'gateway' to Dartmoor National Park, offering road, public transport and active travel links to other Dartmoor settlements, not intervening would constrain access to amenities and businesses within the National Park. This would be particularly undesirable given that many tourist-oriented businesses have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning there is a strong need to remove barriers to trade to enable them to 'bounce back'. In 2019, tourism formed a very significant part of West Devon's economy, supporting over 10% of its employment base and contributing over £119m of spend annually to its economy. Plymouth's western employment area, where there is significant investment and growth encompassing Devonport and Oceansgate Enterprise Zone, would continue to be constrained by the lack of sustainable transport accessibility, limiting the supply chain opportunities and employee catchment.

For those without access to a car, access to jobs and services would continue to be severely constrained, particularly in relation to employment sites around Devonport and west Plymouth, which is not served by direct buses from Tavistock, but would be served by the proposed rail services (see Figure 3 below). As households without access to a car are disproportionately from lower income groups, this would disproportionately impact already disadvantaged households, and be detrimental to social mobility.

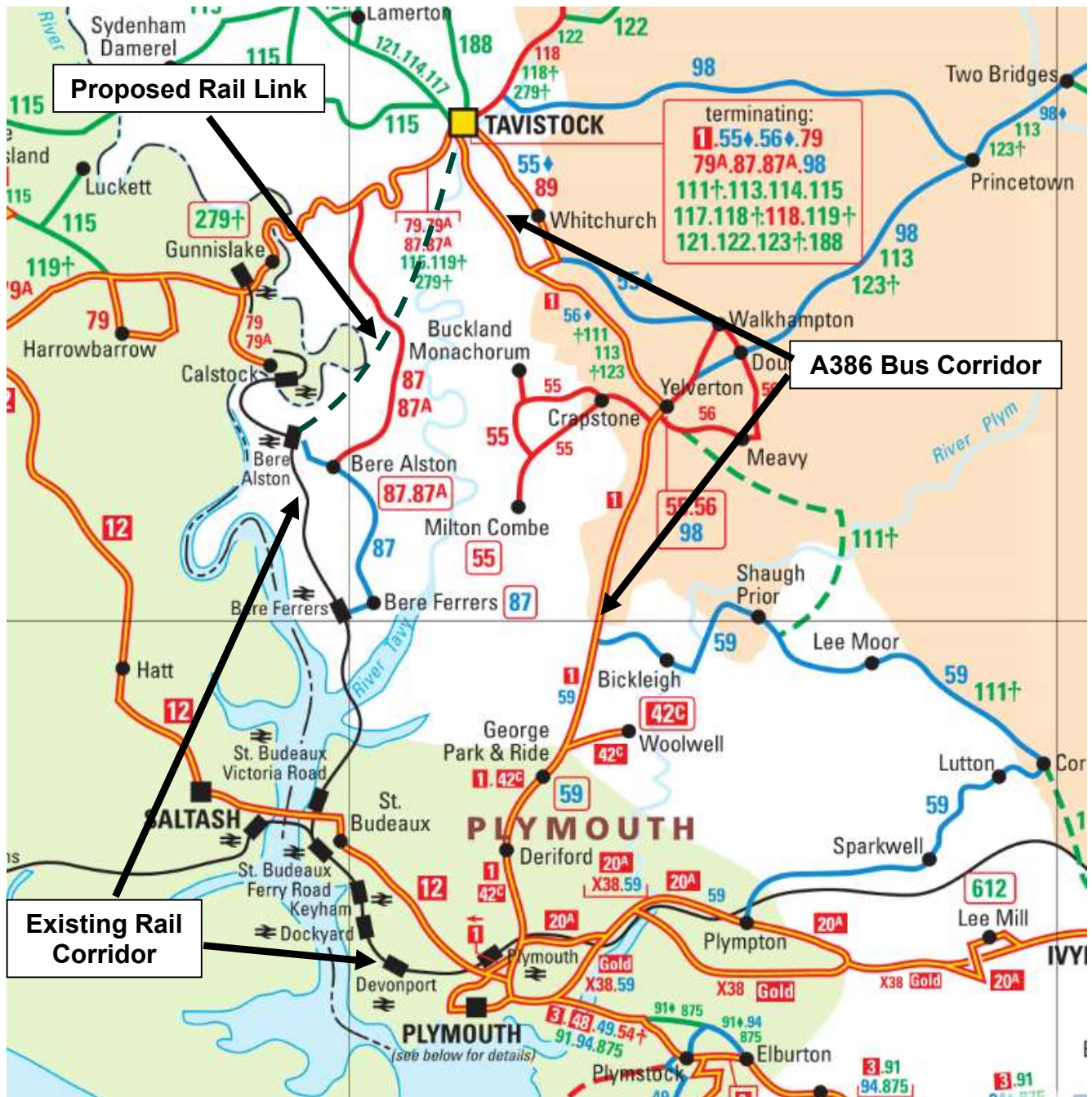


Figure 3: Proposed rail link in relation to existing transport corridors.

Project Dependencies & Risks

Confirm project constraints and/or dependencies. These could include planning restrictions, stakeholder support, construction and capacity constraints.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

Re-opening the railway would require a Development Consent Order to be approved by the Planning Inspectorate, as it is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. As the Shillamill Viaduct is Grade II listed¹⁰, works to bring the viaduct into a safe condition for maintenance staff (principally repointing stonework and safety measures) would also require approval from English Heritage and other interested parties.

¹⁰ See <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1246222>

DCC has already acquired approximately 85% of the required land, as shown by the map in Section 8 below, and is in the process of securing the remainder. All landowners are aware of the rail proposals with some remaining parcel landowners awaiting more certainty on its delivery before entering into any agreement. DCC and its agents NPS have extensive experience of assembling the land necessary to deliver strategic transport projects, such as the recently-approved North Devon Link Road improvements scheme.

One of the potential risks was how the service could operate without impacting negatively on the existing 2 hourly Plymouth to Gunnislake service; however, this risk has been mitigated by GWR and NR developing a minor signalling scheme, which would maintain the existing rail frequency to Cornwall stations while delivering an hourly service to Tavistock.

There is widespread support at the County and District level through its inclusion in the Plymouth and South West Devon Local Plan and positive discussions have been held with the Tamar Valley AONB about the project's impact and potential for increased sustainable tourism.

What are the key risks and issues faced by the proposed project and how can these be mitigated?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

Failure to secure external funding support: significant work has been undertaken to date demonstrating the benefits and viability of the scheme. There is a clear level of support for the proposals and these accord well with a range of local and national policies, including Levelling Up, Decarbonisation and the Climate Emergency. However, the project cannot be delivered without external funding support. There is a strong case for the scheme, and funding opportunities will continue to be sought where possible.

Cost increases: robust cost estimates will be sought, though it is recognised that there will be a degree of uncertainty and risk. Strong communication will be developed in the project team to ensure these are reported early with appropriate mitigation sought. The Business Case development will enable a value for money assessment to be maintained if cost estimates change. Spend will be capped, if necessary, to manage total spend.

Revisions to legislation or Network Rail/Department for Transport standards during the scheme development phase may require design changes to ensure continued compliance. To mitigate this risk as far as practicable, a continuing dialogue will be maintained between the design team and Network Rail, to enable the requirements of forthcoming legislation/standards to be proactively accommodated.

Structures conditions: following de-vegetation and the carrying out of further surveys, additional structural issues affecting bridges and/or earthworks may be revealed, potentially necessitating additional remedial measures and thus increasing the project cost and duration. However, the majority of disused structures on the proposed route are understood to be in reasonable condition, and initial assessment of the embankments has concluded that they meet stability requirements. To mitigate the potential impacts of this, an allowance for risk will be included in the overall scheme budget, enabling unexpected circumstances to be dealt with without exceeding funding envelopes.

Stakeholder Management

Please Identify the key stakeholders for your bid, their interest in the bid and how you plan to work with them. What train operator(s) might be involved in delivering the proposed services? Have you engaged with them at this stage? Do you have their support?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

Key Stakeholders

The proposed project has the longstanding support of numerous local and regional stakeholders. These include the following:

- Sir Geoffrey Cox QC, MP for Torridge and West Devon;
- Mel Stride, MP for Central Devon;
- Johnny Mercer, MP for Plymouth Moor View;
- Luke Pollard, MP for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport;
- Sir Gary Streeter, MP for South West Devon;
- Devon County Council, Local Transport Authority and scheme promoter;
- West Devon Borough Council, Local Planning Authority;
- Plymouth City Council, neighbouring Transport Authority and Planning Authority;
- Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- Network Rail;
- Great Western Railway (GWR);
- Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF, comprising Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council);
- Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body;
- Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- OkeRail, local community organisation.

Rail Stakeholders

Integral to this submission has been the support of both GWR and Network Rail (NR) who have been engaged with the preparation of this bid. GWR and NR have undertaken extensive development work to establish a preferred operating solution for the route, which provides the greatest degree of confidence that this scheme is both realistic and achievable.

The County Council has an established strong working relationship with NR and GWR on several other projects in the County including Marsh Barton Station and the successful Okehampton to Exeter reinstatement and we would expect to continue this positive engagement and collaborative effort on this scheme.

In terms of other listed stakeholders, this submission has evidenced how the County, Plymouth City and South Hams and West Devon Borough Councils have worked in collaboration to develop a shared vision for improved rail connectivity in the Plymouth travel to work area. This has translated into Local Plan policy and is a key transportation infrastructure requirement to tackle both congestion issues whilst also maximising the benefits created by the significant investment in Oceansgate Enterprise Zone and the Devonport naval dockyard.

At a sub-regional level, the 5 transport authorities, together with the two LEPs have jointly made the case for the reopening of this line in its PRTF 20 year plan and the Sub National

Transport Board will continue to work with its MPs to make the case for investment in the South West rail infrastructure to boost resilience, connectivity and capacity.

What other support is there for the bid and how do you plan to maintain this? Are local communities supportive of the bid and can you provide any evidence of this support?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

A high-level public consultation on re-opening the Tavistock-Bere Alston rail line, and providing a walking/cycling trail alongside the railway, was conducted in January and February 2013. According to the Consultation Outcomes Report, 465 responses were submitted (by post, at consultation events and electronically) to the consultation questionnaire, some 40% of which were from people based in Tavistock and 25% of which came from Bere Alston residents.

Over 60% of consultation respondents were in support of reinstating the railway. The reasons given for supporting the reopening largely overlap with the rationale for the intervention described above, with over 100 respondents citing the need to provide sustainable alternative modes of transport, and almost as many noting the existing highways issues on the A386 corridor. Other responses highlighted the potential for the proposal to improve access to Tavistock and Plymouth, and thus benefit local residents and businesses.

Representations from members of the public in support of this proposal have continued to be received in recent years, hence it is believed there is continuing community support for the bid. Furthermore, in his letter in support of this bid, Sir Geoffrey Cox QC, MP for Torridge and West Devon, states that many of his constituents “support Devon County Council’s bid for funding from the Restoring Your Railway Fund Ideas Fund” and feel that additional transport capacity “would be best delivered by restoring the rail link to Plymouth [from Tavistock]”.

In light of the strong previous public support for this proposal, it is expected that further consultation as part of the Development Consent Order process would be positively received by members of the public and stakeholders.

What opposition is there to the bid (if any)? How do you plan to overcome this?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

As noted above, responses to the 2013 public consultation were generally supportive of the proposals. Those who opposed the rail reopening cited the links between the rail reinstatement and housing development in Tavistock to which there is some local opposition, whilst others noted the cost of the project, possible impacts on the road network in the vicinity of the station, and the distance of the proposed station from Tavistock town centre.

To address concerns regarding the scheme cost, the value-for-money of the proposals will be re-evaluated during the development of the Business Case, to verify that the expected scheme benefits continue to exceed estimated costs, and that there is a sound economic case for proceeding. As the scheme is developed further, opportunities for integration with wider walking, cycling and public transport networks will be explored, to maximise the accessibility of the station by sustainable modes.

There is also the potential for opposition from residents or stakeholders based in Cornwall, particularly in the Gunnislake/Calstock area, due to concerns regarding the impacts of the proposed Tavistock-Plymouth services on existing Gunnislake-Plymouth services. However, the development work undertaken by GWR and NR has identified a minor signalling solution that will ensure that existing service frequencies to Gunnislake can be maintained while adding an hourly frequency between Plymouth and Tavistock.

There may be some opposition from active travel groups instead interested in converting the railway to a multi-use trail; however, the indication from District and County Councillors, as demonstrated through its Local Plan policy status, is that reinstatement of the railway remains the most strongly supported intervention amongst the local population. At the request of West Devon Borough Council, the County Council is now progressing an alternative cycle proposal adjacent to the A386 to provide an off-road, safe cycle route between Tavistock and Plymouth. This will complement the existing strategic cycle network in West Devon and Plymouth and help provide an alternative to the rail work. Feasibility work developing options is underway.

Some of the few remaining landowners encompassing the disused rail alignment may oppose the scheme and be unwilling to sell the land. However, as DCC and its agents NPS have extensive experience of assembling the land necessary to deliver strategic transport projects, it is believed this obstacle could be overcome without delay to the overall programme.

6. Socio-economic benefits of the project

In presenting the socio-economic benefits of the project please provide information on the population, employment and gross weekly earnings statistics for the local authority district(s) impacted by the project and the geographic area of the project's origin and destination to help make the case for your bid, where available.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

Population

Tavistock is the largest settlement in West Devon, with a population of approximately 12,500. The wider Tavistock catchment area has a population of approximately 30,000, many of whom work in Plymouth. Groups covering the ages of 20 to 59 account for 47% of the town population.

Plymouth has a population of 262,100, of which some 55% are aged 20-59. Dartmoor and Tavistock are significant leisure visit destinations for Plymouth residents.

Employment Characteristics

The Claimant Count unemployment rates in Tavistock as at January 2021 stands at between 3.5% and 4.6% of the working-age population depending on ward. This is at least double the rate at the start of 2020 (COVID-19 impacts), but still lower than the national unemployment rate of 6.2%. In Plymouth, unemployment is closer to the national average, at 5.9%, 2.6 percentage points up from the previous year.

The economy of West Devon is made up of primarily lower added value sectors and includes a mix of manufacturing, service industries, tourism and agriculture – with a

significant proportion of employment in small firms and high levels of self-employment. Out-commuting from Tavistock to Plymouth is highly significant, particularly for higher paid and professional jobs, with Tavistock located within the Plymouth Travel to Work Area.

Plymouth is a designated port on the Trans-European Network, an international ferry terminal, home to Western Europe's largest naval base and a regional hub for fuel at Cattedown port. It is, nevertheless, a peripheral coastal economy with a high dependency on economic activity clustered around the public sector and manufacturing (31%, and 17%, respectively, of total GVA).

Earnings

Average annual earnings for those working in West Devon are exceptionally low, at around 72% of the national average for full-time employees and 62% overall. Many people therefore travel outside of the district to access higher paid employment, which increases residence-based pay for West Devon to 88% of the national average for people full-time employed and 85% overall (source: Office for National Statistics).

As shown in Table 4 below, the difference between median pay for West Devon workers and for England as a whole has been increasing in recent years, with median weekly pay increasing by just £45 in West Devon between 2010 and 2020, compared to an average of approximately £75 across England overall. The median pay for Plymouth workers has consistently been greater than for West Devon workers, but still below the national average.

Year	West Devon MWP (£)	Plymouth MWP (£)	England MWP (£)
2010	300.7	387.1	409.7
2011	313.0	380.7	405.1
2012	314.5	407.4	412.4
2013	299.1	395.9	420.9
2014	331.0	400.8	421.6
2015	326.4	423.8	429.0
2016	329.9	403.1	441.7
2017	363.5	418.3	454.0
2018	313.2	439.4	465.6
2019	326.7	433.0	483.0
2020	344.4	441.8	482.9

Table 4: Comparison between median weekly pay (MWP) for West Devon and Plymouth workers and national average, from Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Workplace Analysis⁸.

Productivity

The accommodation and food sectors are highly represented in West Devon, reflecting the large visitor economy partly linked to Dartmoor National Park. However, highly-skilled occupations are under-represented, with many professionals commuting outside of the area for employment. Consequently, productivity per head is among the lowest in Devon, at just 78% of the national average.

Plymouth has traditionally struggled to raise its competitiveness and productivity (its GVA per hour worked stands at 83% of the UK average). This is, in part, due to

a low business density and start-up rate, on which it ranks 62nd, and 59th amongst the UK's 63 Key Cities. This, in turn, can be explained by poor connectivity with the rest of the region, which acts as a deterrent for inward investment and the migration of skilled workers, as well as poor reliability on intra-city transport links that connect large employers with the staff that they need.

Transport benefits

Please provide an overview of the transport benefits that the project could deliver, with consideration of expected levels of demand (including assessments of population catchment areas), journey time savings and new journey opportunities created by the project. Please also outline how your project will integrate with other modes of transport such as cycle routes, local bus services and adequate station car parking facilities.

(Note: at this stage the expected transport benefits may only be qualitative, and if development of this is part of the feasibility/ideas work needed, please state this).

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

A Transport & Economics Report (February 2015) estimated the levels of patronage at the proposed Tavistock station, based on Roadside Interview data (used to identify trips which could possibly transfer from road to rail) and mode share relationships between rail and car use in the Tamar Valley line corridor. An opening year patronage of 555 trips per day per direction was derived, increasing to over 1,400 20 years post-opening. A small number of these trips were predicted to be diverted from bus or abstracted from Gunnislake rail station, but the vast majority were expected to transfer from car. This report did not consider the increases in rail patronage at Bere Alston, St Budeaux (Victoria Road), Keyham and Devonport arising from the uplifts in service frequencies to these stations, so represents a conservative estimate of the total trips potentially attracted to rail by the proposed project.

The Report also evaluated the value for money of the proposed scheme, considering both travel time and cost savings for those switching from car to the new rail service, and benefits to those continuing to use the A386 road corridor, due to the relief of congestion on the route. Additionally, as rail fare revenue was expected to exceed operating costs, benefits also accrued to the train operating company. Under low and high growth scenarios, the Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of the scheme was found to be 4.1 and 5.5, respectively, representing 'Very High' value for money, whilst a scenario where rail demand was capped 10 years post-opening still forecast 'High' value for money, with a BCR of 3.4.

As illustrated by Figure 3 above, the proposed rail services would serve a different corridor to existing bus services between Tavistock and Plymouth, with the former operating via Bere Alston, St Budeaux and Devonport, and the latter serving Yelverton, Derriford and Mutley Plain. Therefore, it is considered that the rail and bus services will largely be complementary rather than competitive.

As shown in Table 5 below, bus stops on Callington Road (from which the proposed Tavistock station would be accessed) are served by two hourly services, Plymouth Citybus route 79/79A to Callington via Gunnislake and Calstock, and Stagecoach route 87/87A to Bere Alston, and three less than daily services. As most destinations served are closer to existing rail stations (at Gunnislake, Calstock and Bere Alston) than Tavistock, it is considered that the likelihood of passengers on these buses seeking to access the rail

network at Tavistock (i.e. interchange between bus and rail) is relatively small. However, bus services connecting the housing development off Callington Road to Tavistock town centre (to be funded through S106 payments) could also be used to access the adjacent rail station, and would connect with other services at Tavistock Bus Station.

Service	Route	Existing Rail Stations Served	Frequency (Mon-Sat, Each Direction)
79/79A	Tavistock – Gunnislake – Calstock – Callington	Gunnislake, Calstock	1 journey per hour
87/87A	Tavistock – Bere Alston – Bere Ferrers*	Bere Alston*, Bere Ferrers*	1 journey per hour
115 [†]	Tavistock – Gunnislake – Luckett – Stoke Climsland – Tavistock	Gunnislake	1 journey per day (Fridays only)
119 [†]	Tavistock – Gunnislake – Callington – Liskeard – Truro – Falmouth	Gunnislake	1 journey per day (2 nd Saturday of month, March – December)
279 [†]	Callington* – Gunnislake* – Tavistock – Lydford – Okehampton*	Gunnislake*, Okehampton*	3 journeys per day (Summer Sundays only)

Table 5: Buses serving Callington Road stops near proposed station. * - certain journeys only, † - currently suspended.

The proposed station site is slightly less than 1 mile from Tavistock town centre, corresponding to an approximately 15 minute walk, via a route with existing footways. As Tavistock is on the West Devon Way walking route and the Dartmoor Way and Drake's Trail multi-use routes, there would also be the potential for people to use active travel to access the station from further afield.

From Plymouth railway station, where the proposed services are expected to terminate initially¹¹, there are onward rail, bus and walking/cycling connections to Plymouth city centre, Exeter and London. Furthermore, the public realm around the station forecourt is being improved through the Transforming Cities Fund¹², with the objective of enhancing active travel links to the station. Therefore, the proposed service would also facilitate trips between Tavistock and the wider South West region, via connections at Plymouth.

Under the S106 agreement for the housing development off Callington Road, DCC will receive land for the construction of a railway station car park subsequent to the occupation of the 400th dwelling or the commencement of development to the east of the site (whichever is the earlier). A proportionate approach will be taken to the provision of car parking at the station, with the aim of encouraging people to travel sustainably to/from the station where feasible, whilst also recognising the net potential benefits of trips combining rail and the private car compared to those solely relying on the private car.

If this bid is successful, the funding would be partially used to refresh the economic modelling and patronage forecasts summarised above, and further develop proposals for integration with other modes.

¹¹ As shown in Appendix 1, a future phase of improvements would see services extended to Ivybridge.

¹² See

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/parkingandtravel/transportplansandprojects/transportplans/transformingcitiesfund/plymouthstationforecourtinterchange>

Wider benefits

Please provide an overview of the wider economic benefits that the project could deliver, with consideration of additional job opportunities, improving access to key services and facilitating new development. Please also outline the anticipated environmental impact and/or benefits of the project. For example, does the project serve an area covered by an Air Quality Management Area.

(Note: at this stage the expected wider economic benefits may only be qualitative, and if development of these forms part of the feasibility/ideas work needed please state this).

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

Wider economic benefits

This project will enable significantly greater ease of travelling for leisure, business and employment purposes, including much easier access to connecting long distance rail services at Plymouth.

West Devon's economy has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and is among the most heavily impacted areas nationally¹³. It is expected that this project will increase the economic resilience of existing businesses in Tavistock and their ability to trade more easily and widely; and significantly will encourage the bounce-back of and potentially increase leisure and tourism visits. This proposal will also improve access to the tourist attractions within the Tamar Valley AONB and Dartmoor National Park, and visitor numbers would likely increase following the scheme's opening.

The project will link the Tavistock area to the employment areas of Plymouth, which have proved significantly more resilient in economic terms to the COVID-19 pandemic, negating the need to navigate potentially congested roads and opening up job opportunities to people without the use of a car. This will in turn give employers based around Devonport and west Plymouth access to a greater labour pool, increasing these firms' competitiveness.

Key factors linked to both the potential existing and expanding demand for a new rail station at Tavistock include:

- Tavistock has an expanding population
- Tavistock and its immediate PL19 catchment currently has 671 VAT registered businesses, employing well over 5,000 people, with the broader business base much larger – there is significant scope to expand this business base and the further attractiveness of Tavistock as a business location

The Value of Tourism Model for 2019 shows the significance of the visitor economy immediately pre-Covid for the District of West Devon. Most recent outputs:

- 263,500 annual staying visitor trips;
- 1,033,600 annual staying visitor nights;
- £62,229,000 annual staying visitor spend;

¹³ Institute for Fiscal Studies research 2020/21

- 1,647,000 annual day visits;
- £119,345,000 total visitor related spending; and
- 2,500 modelled actual visitor-related employment within the District itself.

The proposals would ensure the transport infrastructure in Tavistock supports economic growth, and enhances access to education, due to the proximity of Tavistock Community College and further and higher education institutes in Plymouth.

Environmental impacts

The Transport & Economics Report assessed the expected environmental impacts of the scheme and forecast:

- Slight beneficial impacts on noise and air quality, due to reductions in car traffic on the A386 corridor;
- A moderate beneficial impact on greenhouse gas emissions, due to modal shift from car to rail;
- Negligible or slight adverse impacts on landscape and biodiversity; and
- Negligible impacts on townscape, heritage of historic resources and water environment.

The project is expected to remove vehicular traffic from the Plymouth Air Quality Management Area, which was declared in 2014 for nitrogen dioxide, and encompasses the A386 corridor between Woolwell and Plymouth city centre.

The A386 corridor also passes through part of the Dartmoor National Park, and the Roborough Down and Walkham Valley Woods Strategic Nature Areas, areas of Devon's countryside which contain "higher than average concentrations of existing wildlife habitats"¹⁴. As such, by removing traffic from the corridor, the proposal would likely reduce the impacts of traffic noise and pollution on the flora and fauna within these areas.

If this proposal is progressed, further environmental surveys would be required to fully assess the potential environmental impacts and identify opportunities for mitigation.

7. Project deliverability

What will be the impact of the project on the existing railway infrastructure and operations? Please set out the impact both during the construction phase and 'business as usual' once the work is completed.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

As the majority of works would be related to the construction of an entirely new railway line, the impacts on the existing rail network are expected to be minimal. However, as outlined above, the project would likely require minor signalling and/or capacity improvements at Bere Alston station, to enable it to accommodate trains to/from Tavistock in addition to existing Gunnislake services. There will be a small amount of possessions (non-disruptive and disruptive) to facilitate the minor signalling works at Bere Alston,

¹⁴ See <https://www.dbrc.org.uk/snas-in-your-area/>

during which alternative road transport would be provided for passengers. Network Rail and GWR are supportive of this approach.

Once the work is completed, there should be no material impact on existing rail passengers, as the new services will be timetabled so as to ensure current service frequencies and journey times to/from Gunnislake to be maintained or enhanced. As noted above, the precise details of how this will be achieved will be investigated as the business case is developed.

Please provide an estimate of the proposed capital costs to deliver and operate this project?

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

A 2019 cost estimate applied inflation (assuming a scheme opening of year of 2027) along with an optimism bias of 66% (as recommended by Green Book Supplementary Guidance¹⁵ for “non-standard civil engineering projects”) to a GRIP 2/3 estimate produced in 2015, arriving at a total capital cost of up to £93m. This was broken down as shown in Table 6 below.

Cost Head	Estimate (£m)
Rail works & Network Rail fees	10.4
Civils & structures	10.5
Indirect works	5.1
Scheme development costs	3.6
Utility diversion works	0.3
Land costs	2.8
Risk	1.0
Total excl. Optimism Bias	33.8
Total incl. 66% Optimism Bias	56.0
Inflation (4% per annum)	37.3
Grand Total	93.3

Table 6: Summary of 2019 capital cost estimate.

As this project is developed further, the above cost estimates would be revised and refined, including working with GWR to estimate the operating costs. It is hoped that the development of the scheme design will enable costs to be estimated with greater certainty, enabling a reduction in the optimism bias factor and hence the estimated scheme cost. However, a generous allowance for optimism bias is appropriate at this stage.

Please provide an outline programme for the delivery of the SOBC, including estimated timescale from start to delivery. If the development of an outline programme is an aspect of the proposed feasibility work, please state this.

Please write your answer here [max 500 words]

This programme is indicative and dependent upon the level of funding. Certain aspects can be accelerated and undertaken in parallel, which has the potential to shorten the overall programme.

¹⁵ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/191507/Optimism_bias.pdf

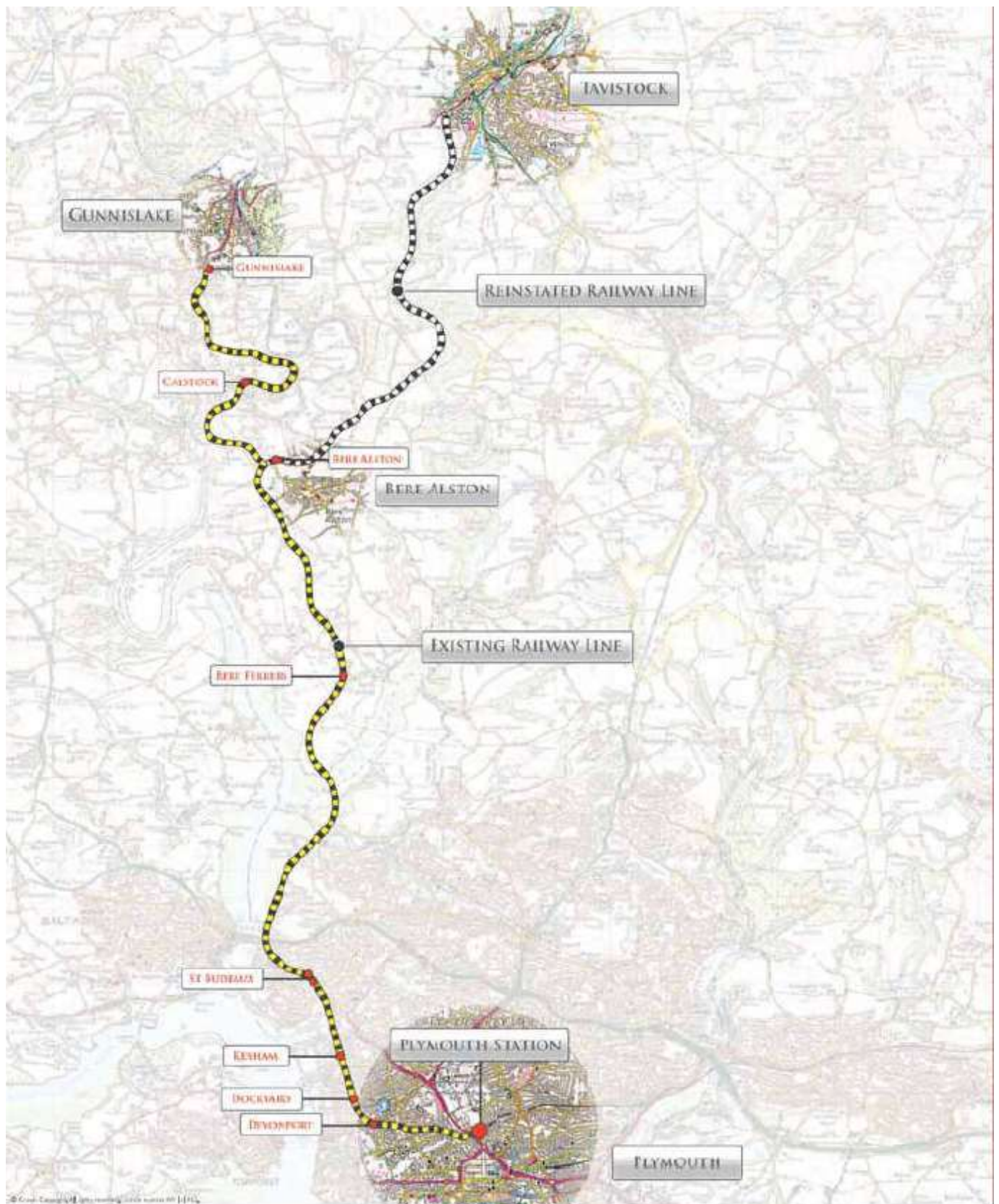
Project inception: Month 0 (on receipt of funding)

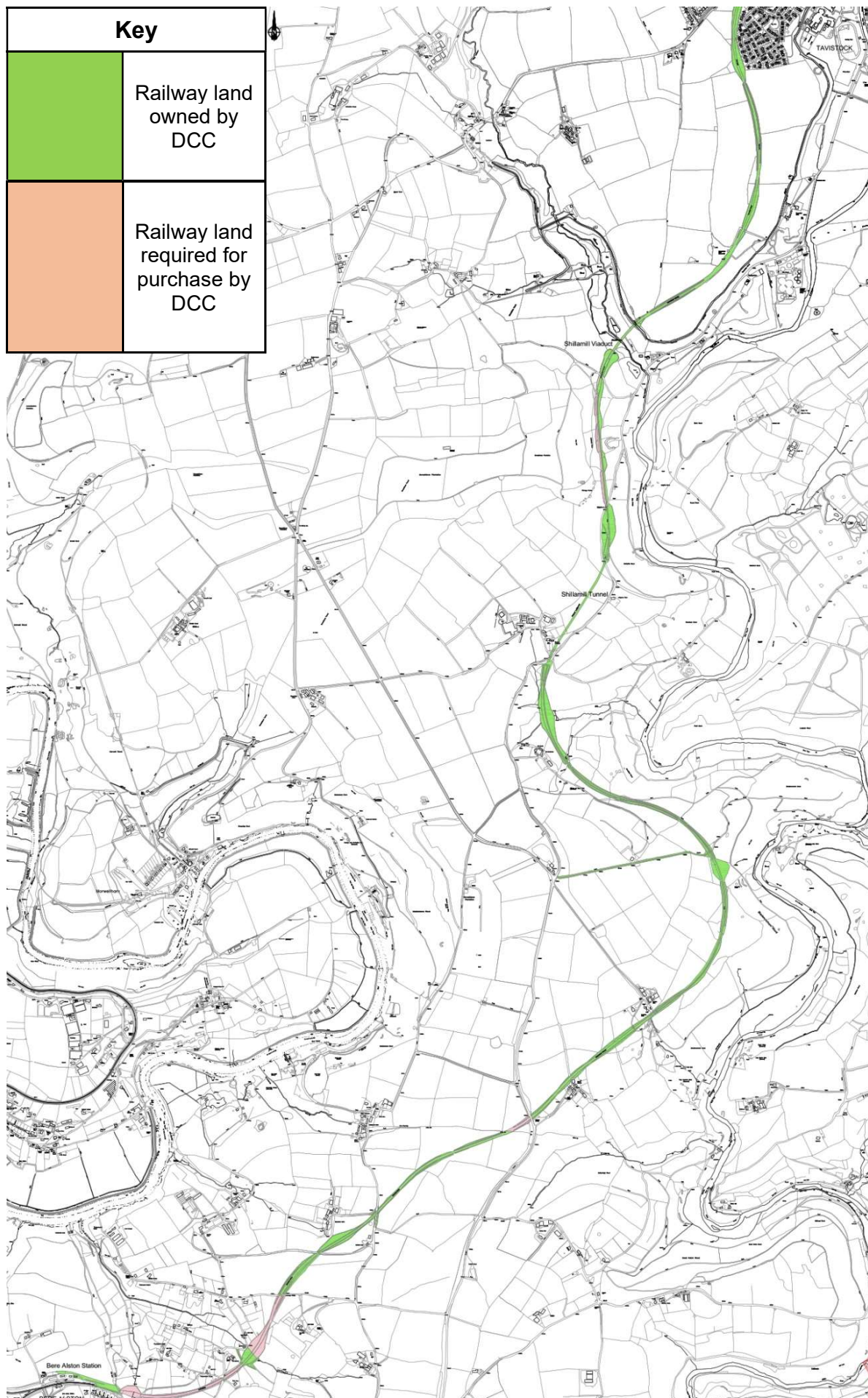
Determine scope of studies required: Month 1

Completion of Strategic Outline Business Case: Month 10

DCC will develop the SOBC and delivery strategy with support from NR and GWR. This has many similarities with the successful Okehampton to Exeter Rail Line Reopening and Project SPEED Principles will be applied should the project be formally adopted within the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline process.

8. Maps of your proposed project





9. Additional information request

Are you happy for DfT and its advisers to use the attached contact details to request further information regarding the application if necessary?	Yes / No
Do you consent to your contact details being added to a communications distribution list that would mean you are kept up to date on new developments related to this subject area?	Yes / No
Do you consent to the outline details of this proposal being published as part of communicating about the Restoring Your Railway Fund to stakeholders and the wider public?	Yes / No
Do you consent to the details of this proposal being shared internally and with approved third parties to facilitate the review and assessment of the proposal?	Yes / No

10. Checklist

Please ensure that all submissions to the Ideas Fund contain;

- ✓ A completed Ideas Fund application form
- ✓ A completed 'Additional information request' (Section 9)
- ✓ An email or letter from the MP(s) confirming bid sponsorship