

## OkeRAIL C.I.C. Summary

1. This describes in outline our proposals for re-opening the passenger services rail link from Okehampton to Exeter. It is based on assumptions that synergetic arrangements can be made with the owners (Aggregate Industries Ltd.), present leaseholders (British American Railways Ltd. trading as Dartmoor Railway C.I.C.) and the new franchise train operating company to be appointed by the Government in early 2017.
2. In 2010, Devon County Council stated in their report that a new rail station and resurrection of the rail link was “necessary” and they then set aside £250,000 from the sale of Exeter Airport for support for the construction of a new rail station in the East of Okehampton near the arterial A.30 junction at Stockley Hamlet (the new “Business Park”). This road junction is within 1 minute’s drive of the proposed “Parkway” site.
3. Okehampton has a fast-expanding population, soon to be increased by another 2,500 inhabitants. A small Summer service by rail has been sponsored by Devon County Council as an experiment during the last few years (“Sunday Rover”) and this has proven immensely popular. Passenger surveys were taken and detailed information on its success is available, (as is our business plan and passenger forecasts). Many will be aware that North Cornwall and West Devon suffer from lack of access to rail stations: travellers from Bude, for example, have to drive 60 miles taking at least 1hr 20mins in order to access a railway service just to commence their rail journey to other places in the UK. The effective catchment for a station at Okehampton would be geographically massive if access were made easy from the A.30.
4. The minimum starting position is a basic four trains (two-carriages) a day – two morning and two evening – to provide commuter, tourist, shopper and student travel directly to stations towards central Exeter and beyond. Easy start-up and minimum costs are the intention, since line and infrastructure is mostly already in place and we recognise that preliminary “proving of need” will precede adoption of all aspects of a full daily service. We have considered timetabling pathways in detail and can fully accommodate other users synergetically.



5. The overall view is one of confidence that the recommencement of a daily rail service can be achieved at minimal cost and with minimal disruption, and we have great support from towns like Hatherleigh, Bude, Launceston and Holsworthy. The infrastructure is already in place and

rail tracks and stations are existing to a large extent. The track is already used for small scale commercial purposes. Timetabling has been carefully reviewed and fits with existing use 340 days out of 365. The timetable clashes with the present lessee on those 25 days can be resolved. Rolling stock resources will be available due to near-future renewals elsewhere (we don't mind having secondhand stock, maybe an old HST?) and any new operating Company (2017) could incorporate the extension of service at minimal cost. The least costly option for four trains a day, with a (temporary) rail halt at Hameldown Road, would be approximately £1,000,000. Further, more expensive options, include a permanent full station on the South side of the tracks at Okehampton Business Park (Stockley Road) with an additional dual line to 'future proof' the investment, at >£5M

6. Compilers of the reports to date comprise local volunteers, experts and interested individuals who have given their time and resources free of charge for many years and tirelessly in order to promote the achievement of the aim described above. We (OkeRAIL C.I.C.) invite you to help us in our endeavours to persuade the decision-makers to "**get us back on track**" after a 42 year break.

**Join OkeRAIL C.I.C. for £20 annually, renewable every November.**

**SOME RELEVANT POINTS:-**

7. The population of Okehampton is fast growing and this increases the rate of potential passenger growth. Passenger catchment for a Parkway style station at Okehampton Business Park would also extend far beyond the Okehampton area, to Bude and Launceston, allowing 120,000 people to access reasonable rail travel – where they couldn't before.
8. The Sunday Rover showed that two thirds of people using the line came from the Okehampton area, whilst a third of people came from further afield highlighting Okehampton as a potential rail hub, (similar to Totnes for example).
9. A proportion of Crediton and Newton St Cyres passengers would use the Okehampton service and this would ease congestion on Tarka Line Services (Exeter to Barnstaple) giving increased "Metro" access into the City.
10. Passenger growth on the Tarka Line is running at over 7% and this is likely at Okehampton too. Rail travel in Devon and Cornwall is growing faster than the national average, in spite of poor access.
11. The extra growth that 900 new houses will produce in Okehampton will increase passenger numbers significantly, adding to the 500 houses just built.
12. A daily service would help a significant part of the local population reduce journey times to London as well as connecting them to destinations in the SW and other parts of the UK. This gives an annual Gross Value Added (GVA) uplift of at least £3.5M to the economy
13. Based on four daily services, there would be a deficit of around £250,000 in the first year between operating costs and revenue, but this would rapidly turn into a profitable service based on the realistic projections we have carried out.

14. With all three levels of growth, revenue would reach operating costs somewhere between year 4 and year 7
15. As patronage increases additional services could be added as funds allowed, in the same way as the Tarka Line has experienced.
16. We note that elsewhere in the UK many stations and railways are being re-opened and that rail usage has increased nationally by 45% over the last ten years. This is recognised in the Govt. sponsored re-opening of lines like Galashiels and the Network Rail funds being made available in NR1, NR2 (£20M just allocated), and hopefully NR3 in the near future.

The service we propose is **POTENTIALLY VIABLE** in its own right, within four years.  
(End of Executive Summary)

