

## **TORBAY RAIL LINE USERS GROUP RESPONSE TO RAIL COMPETITION PROPOSALS**

Torbay with a resident population of about 140K is the second largest conurbation west of Bristol only Plymouth with a population of about 250K is larger

It is a major resort with well over a million overnight visitor per annum, roughly the same as Bournemouth but greater than Brighton

The Torbay economy is highly dependent on the overnight visitor market. It is estimated that nearly a quarter of local employment is generated directly or indirectly by this market.

In order to get overnight visitors into Torbay it needs well timed direct services from the main population centres.

Currently all London services to Devon (beyond Exeter) and Cornwall are provided by (First) Great Western. Until 2009 South West Trains from Waterloo also provided services between Torbay and London. These services were not subsidised. The Department for Transport ordered South West Trains to cease running services beyond Exeter to 'embed' an hourly service on the Exeter - Waterloo line. This meant that Torbay lost over 50% of its direct train services to and from London. Only about 10% of these have been replaced by Great Western.

Now that the hourly Exeter – Waterloo service has been 'embedded' it is time to extend Waterloo services beyond Exeter. The Rail Minister, Claire Perry, has publically stated that she would welcome this,

As such, the Torbay Line Rail Users Group would welcome Option 3, namely, overlapping franchises.

This would enable Waterloo services to provide effective competition to Paddington services on the Torbay – London train services

This would reintroduce direct services between Torbay and London Waterloo

providing more frequent services with London, greater passenger choice, and more competitive fares.