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Peter Strachan,
Route Director, London and North West
Network Rail
Kings Place
90 York Way
London N1 9AG

November 10 2008

Dear Mr Strachan

Hereford to Birmingham Line

We were delighted to read via PPC Jesse Norman's Press Release that Network Rail and considering investing in twin tracking the Hereford to Ledbury line.

Our group has been campaigning for this for over ten years. The need is great. The line was only removed in 1982 (it was not a Beeching cut) and ever since, has experienced congestion. Both London and Birmingham bound trains use the track, both First Great Western (the London trains) and London Midland (the Birmingham trains) would like to run a more frequent and reliable service, but they can't, due to the single line. The distance is about 14 miles and it takes 20 minutes. Because of this we experience frequent delays, cancellations, and a restricted service.

Hereford is a city of 65,000. Herefordshire has been identified by government as a sub regional focus of development which means at least 18,000 new houses in the next plan period 2011 to 2025, half of these in the city itself. It is an important junction as well, with frequent Cardiff Manchester trains stopping at Hereford, allowing passengers to change onto the west-east line. This line is very busy, trains I travel on are full with standing room only and the Welsh Assembly have pin pointed it as a high speed North Wales to South Wales route.

It is possible that some of the £5,000 per house subsidy that the new housing will bring plus additional developer funding may be available to help fund the twin track.

If Hereford does expand in the way that is planned, the twin track will be essential, indeed it is now. People do/will want to travel to Birmingham, London and places in between and if we are going to keep traffic congestion and CO₂ within Government limits, they will have to use public transport. We experience a good train service in Hereford at the moment, but there is congestion and delays. With the extra population this will only get worse.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Gerald Dawe
Co Chair, Rail for Herefordshire