



**Department
for Transport**

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From the Minister of State
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Dear Aidan

Thank you for your letter of 22 February to Chris Grayling, about the re-instatement of the Lewes to Uckfield railway line. I am replying as Minister responsible for rail.

The Government is committed to considering the case for reopening railway lines where there is a strong case for doing so. Successful schemes must demonstrate good value for money.

As we made clear in our strategic vision for rail, we have already identified a number of previously closed rail lines that could be reopened. The list of schemes in the strategic vision was not meant to be exhaustive. We fully expect other rail lines and stations to be considered for reopening in the future.

You asked for additional information about how former railway lines will be considered. Any large rail scheme would be evaluated on the basis of a formal business case which sets out the need for the scheme and compares its costs and benefits. Guidance on how to produce a business case is published by HM Treasury.

In addition, Network Rail and the Campaign for Better Transport produce guidance for local authorities and others who are interested in promoting new rail schemes. The guidance can be found at these links:

www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Investment-in-Stations-2017.pdf

www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/expanding-the-railways.pdf

In the specific case of the Lewes-Uckfield line, the Government commissioned consultants WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff to examine the case for a number of rail lines between London and the South East. Their report is at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/595947/london-south-coast-rail-corridor.pdf

The consultants concluded that there was a poor transport case for reopening the Lewes-Uckfield line, but that it might be possible to construct an effective business case if there was a substantial uplift in housing or commercial development.

The Government accepted the consultants' recommendations:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/london-and-south-coast-rail-corridor-study-government-response

The Government would be happy to consider such a business case if local partners, including local authorities and LEPs, were able to produce it. We recently published guidance on this, which can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-network-enhancements-pipeline

I hope these documents are useful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PP' followed by a stylized signature.

JO JOHNSON

(Signed by PS to avoid delay)