

**Statement from Exeter MP Steve Race for 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Convention of the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026**



The moment Steve Race MP names the NDRDA in his opening address for the Westminster Hall debate on his Motion “That this House has considered ‘*The future of rail services in Devon*’” on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024

*“I would like to start by expressing my sincere apologies for being unable to join you today; however, I want to emphasize how much I value the work you all do.*

*The severity and regularity of storms across the peninsula have transitioned into an annual occurrence, presenting significant challenges to the resilience of our railway infrastructure. Recent events have highlighted these vulnerabilities, including the closure of the Dawlish Line, the line between Taunton and Exeter St Davids, and the Barnstaple line being down for three weeks.*

*These disruptions have a tangible impact on our economy and our people. Exeter College students have already missed 10% of their course as a direct result of these infrastructure failures, people are unable to travel in a timely manner to work, and some businesses feel the impact on trading. The proposed closure of the line for further works, especially in term time compound these issues.*

*To address these issues, I have written to a range of stakeholders to request data on the specific impacts these closures have had on them. Additionally, I am meeting with the Transport Secretary next week to discuss forward planning with my colleagues.*

*Finally, I would like to thank you for your work on the North Devon line improvement. I deeply value the efforts you have all put in, and I will continue to make raising investment into our rail lines a top priority.”*