

30<sup>th</sup> August 2017



Shane Ross, TD  
**Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport**  
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Dear Minister Ross,

On behalf of the members of Waterford Chamber I wish to express our concern over the suggestion that the Waterford to Limerick Rail route faces closure over shortages in funding.

We have been very vocal in seeking better connectivity with the West and while we wait for Budget 2018 in respect of motorway developments between Waterford and Limerick, it is imperative we maintain the rail connection.

Looking to the future, there are tremendous plans in place for Irish Rail in Waterford with the proposed relocation of the station to the heart of the new North Quays development. Now is the time to look at increasing connectivity to Waterford, not take it away.

While we are anxious to maintain links with another major city, we understand that the Limerick to Waterford line also serves Tipperary Town, Cahir, Clonmel and Carrick On Suir and consideration must be given to the implications of cutting off those in rural Ireland.

At a cost from just €13 and a journey time of 2hrs 30 mins, the service, when running, is actually quite a good one, considering the poor road conditions. Unfortunately, the route has been very poorly promoted and we see this as an opportunity lost in terms of tourism and business connections.

Sadly, it came to our attention in recent weeks that a cycling enthusiast from Limerick had planned a day out with friends to the Waterford Greenway. On arriving at Limerick Junction, he was informed the train to Waterford was not in service. A bus transfer was offered but could not accommodate all the bikes. The gentleman's group of friends were due to board in Clonmel, which was also not serviced, and their day out to Waterford was ruined.

This cannot be tolerated. Waterford is doing its utmost to promote the destination and attractions such as the Greenway have opened up avenues for tourists from all over the country. If they cannot get here, it is very worrying.

It has been stated the proposed cuts are due to poor passenger numbers, but if the trains aren't running, how can that be a legitimate indicator? Before any decision is made certain questions need to be answered. How many times are bus transfers offered in place of trains? Why is the service not promoted? Why is there no service on Sundays?

We are now calling on Irish Rail to reconsider the matter with immediate effect and make available all documentation on which they formed the basis for this decision. We are also requesting your intervention in this matter Minister and look forward to a favourable response at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,

Gerald Hurley  
CEO Waterford Chamber

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