

The Shakespeare Line Promotion Group wants authorities to look into reopening the railway line between Stratford upon Avon and Honeybourne.

It says it would provide better connectivity for growing populations in the area, making 60-minute journeys between Evesham and Birmingham a reality.

The Secretary of Shakespeare Line Promotion Group (SLPG), Fraser Pithie, said: “We believe that developers should fund sustainable infrastructure improvements, and local people are right to expect their local authorities to use the powers available to them to require things such as a first step to determine if re-opening was economically viable. An Economic Impact Study (EIS) would comprehensively evaluate this.”

“The closed rail route between Honeybourne and Stratford upon Avon could help support the long-term economic case for the Cotswold Line redoubling while representing a significant opportunity to link the South Midlands with Birmingham and the West Midlands.

“We have asked Cotswold District Council to engage with other local authorities to obtain the detail and level of potential economic benefits arising from re-opening the railway between Honeybourne and Stratford so the viability of such a scheme can be comprehensively evaluated and considered.” Mr Pithie added.

The SLPG has written a letter to Councillor Bradley Thomas, leader of Wychavon District Council and Joe Harris, leader Cotswold District Council about the line. In the letter they said the Garden Village development in South Warwickshire, which will see growth by around 6,900 new homes at Long Marston will have a significant cross-border impact.

Cllr Bradley Thomas, leader of Wychavon District Council, said: “Wychavon is aware of the potential for re-opening the railway between Honeybourne and Stratford upon Avon and has protected the corridor falling with Wychavon in our local plan.

“We would seriously consider any request for our help in exploring the viability of this project.”

In 2017 Worcestershire County Council carried out a £10,000 study, funded by various organisations, that considered the economic impact of reopening the railway line that was closed in the 1970s.