WORKING PLYMOUTH

6 November 2013

Connectivity

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to explain the current state of connectivity in Plymouth. It specifically covers physical connectivity by road and rail and digital connectivity through broadband and the opportunity that this presents for the City.

Physical Connectivity

Introduction

Plymouth has lost its airport and the city is perceived as peripheral to rest of the UK. The M5 terminates at Exeter and loss of the A38 for any reason through accidents or weather, increases the isolation of city. If growth goes ahead with no enhancement in rail capacity then it will lead to higher car use/ carbon emissions.

Since the loss of the airport in Plymouth and the loss of all-year scheduled air services between Newquay and London, Plymouth and the far south west relies on its connectivity a single strategic road route by means of the M5 motorway and A38/A30 trunk roads providing dual carriageway grade separated road. Similarly, Plymouth and the far South West relies railway connects from Bristol (and from Reading/Newbury) to connect Plymouth to London, the Midlands and the North and Torbay is double track to main line standards, and is served by frequent express trains.

Network Resilience

The flood events of 2012 and early 2013 have had a significant impact on Local Authority budgets and the economic performance of the South West. Climate change projections underline that such events will occur more frequently in the period up to 2050 and beyond.

In order for the South West to cope with these events it needs to adapt. Key to this are the vital improvements needed to its transport networks. As such, strategic infrastructure interventions are required to adapt to climate change and mitigate the associated transportation and economic risks in future. The strategic rail and highway interventions are vital to maintain connectivity for Devon, Somerset, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall.

Most major Trunk Roads witnessed some form of delay or closure which significantly affected the connectivity of the South West. Local highways also bore severe impacts as a result of the weather. Arguably the most severe disruption was caused to the rail network. The flooding of Cowley Bridge near Exeter led to the closure of the main line to London and Bristol severing the strategic rail connectivity of the South West, particularly Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall.

The lack of resilience of the transport network also hit confidence levels of businesses both those currently in the South West looking to expand and also potential investment from outside the South West.

Key interventions needed include:

- Improvements at Cowley Bridge on the Great Western Mainline;
- The provision of additional passing loops on the West of England Mainline (in the vicinity of Honiton) to provide an alternative diversionary route to the South West;
- Localised schemes on the Trunk Road network including improvements to the M5 and A303;
- Additional cross-organisational work between Government, the Highways Agency, Network Rail and Local Authorities to tackle issues of strategic connectivity; and
- Increased funding and support for Local Authority flood risk alleviation measures.

The link between connectivity and productivity

Plymouth is a growth area and has to rebalance its economy away from being over-reliant on the public sector. Positive agglomeration benefits, brought about by improved connectivity and stronger economic links with London and other key urban areas, are imperative to ensure we improve our competitiveness and achieve a successful transition from public to private sector-led growth. Distance and accessibility impact directly on costs of transport and business travel. They impact on the costs of logistics both in terms of inputs and the supply chain and costs of access to markets. For every 100 minutes travel time from London, productivity drops by 6 per cent [1].

The recent analysis undertaken by KPMG for the Government on the economic benefits of HS2 and the subsequent FoI request by the BBC highlighting the extent to which regions not on the proposed HS2 line would be affected, demonstrates the importance of good connectivity to economic output and clearly shows the benefits of HS2 for some regions and the negative impacts it might have on others. For Plymouth, it is estimated that economic output could fall by £14.15m per annum.

Investment that perpetuates regional disparities should concern Government. Former Secretary of State for Transport, Mr. Philip Hammond said in arguing for HS2 "unbalanced growth is not just bad for the North: it's bad for the entire country". Better connectivity to the South West is essential to attract investment and boost employment opportunities.

Then Minister, Theresa Villiers, in her response to the Westminster Hall debate on the 20th December 2011 recognised the link between good rail connectivity and how it supports jobs and growth. She said "Rail connectivity supports jobs and growth, and is, in particular, vital for the tourism sector, which is such an important part of the economy in the area served by the Great Western franchise" and "it would be positive for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Treasury, local enterprise partnerships and local authorities to be engaged in the important decision in question".

How does Plymouth compare?

There is a growing body of evidence showing how peripheral Plymouth will become relative to other cities in England.

Table 1 highlights how Plymouth is the only city in England, of those with populations of over 100,000, to not be included on the Government's defined Strategic National Corridors, will have typical rail journeys to and from London in excess of every other city once HS2 is completed and an economy currently ranked in the top quartile of local authorities most vulnerable to public spending cuts. Plymouth is also one of only two cities in the UK that neither has a motorway within 10 miles nor an operational airport within 25 miles.

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[1] Meeting the productivity challenge, University of Bath and University of West of England (2005)

Table 1: Benchmarking of road and rail connectivity: English Cities outside London

Cities outside of London ranked in order of population	Connected to the Strategic National Corridor	Fastest proposed Journey Time (minutes) to & from London after HS2 and electrification of GWML	Ranking of least Vulnerable to public spending cuts out of 324	Cities outside of London ranked in order of population	Connected to the Strategic National Corridor	Fastest proposed Journey Time (minutes) to & from London after HS2 and electrification of the GWML	Ranking of least Vulnerable to public spending cuts out of 324
Birmingham	Y	49	234	Wolverhampton	Y	75	304
Leeds	Y	80	187	Southampton	Y	76	230
Sheffield	Y	75	266	Portsmouth	Y	99	291
Bradford	Y	109	279	York	Y	113	156
Manchester	Y	73	217	Peterborough	Y	53	220
Liverpool	Y	97	287	Lancaster	Y	135	224
Bristol	Y	77	167	Oxford	Y	50	171
Wakefield	Y	105	268	Preston	Y	108	262
Coventry	Y	57	243	St Albans	Y	19	2
Leicester	Y	53	302	Norwich	N	104	190
Nottingham	Y	55	275	Chester	N	105	168
Newcastle upon Tyne	Y	157	259	Cambridge	Y	123	122
Sunderland	Y	188	308	Salisbury	N	89	79
Kingston upon Hull	Y	146	320	Exeter	Y	123	203
PLYMOUTH	**N**	**192**	**309**	Gloucester	Y	113	218
Brighton and Hove	N	60	140	Chichester	N	88	57
Derby	Y	60	267	Winchester	Y	58	29
Stoke on Trent	Y	65	322	Carlisle	Y	166	233

The Existing Transport Network in the South West – Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats

Strengths

- Motorway/dual carriageway spine route from Bristol to Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay
- Two separate rail routes to London, each offering hourly service pattern, and hourly train services to Bristol/ Midlands/ North
- A strong record of co-operation between local transport authorities

Weaknesses

- Just one motorway into the area
- The motorway ends part-way through the area and does not reach the largest settlement, Plymouth
- Fragility in network resilience as a consequence of our peninsular geography which means that we do not have alternative routes
- Slower rail journey speeds and hence longer journey times than many other regions for links to London and the South East.
- Low population and business density gives a lack of scale in relation to some transport facilities such as Rail freight
- Peak hour congestion in cities may deter business investment
- No direct air links to London and the south east

Opportunities

- Population distribution and growth is closely aligned to the main transport corridors
- The Greater Western Franchise Replacement planned for 2016 gives the city a unique opportunity to press for better rail services in the far South West
- The planned introduction of the Intercity Express Project(IEP) train fleet between London, Taunton and Exeter strengthening the business case for rolling out electrification along the entire length of the south west spine
- Western Access to Heathrow Airport reducing rail journey times to and from the south west
- Investment in improving the A303 and Waterloo to Exeter railway line could transform perception of Heart of the South West as a location for business investment

Threats

- Proposals such as HS2 will make the Heart of the South West more disadvantaged in comparison with areas such as the Midlands and North in terms of connectivity to London
- A new hub airport to the east of London would further disadvantage the Heart of the South West in view of its relative in-accessibility
- The relatively limited scale of the South West Peninsula in comparison with other areas such as the Midlands or North could lead to the South West being starved of investment
- Climate change projections underline that the severe weather events of 2012/13 will occur more frequently. Further disruption arising from a failure of the network to adapt to such changes could lead to a perception that the South West is too high risk an area for business relocations
- Shortage of rail rolling stock to meet the growing demand for local rail travel
- Limited range of services from Exeter airport and extended travel time to Heathrow/Gatwick prejudices International business locating in the Heart of the South West area

Government Policy

Rail

The rail network in the south west has been starved of investment, contributed by the rail industry historically under estimating train passenger growth, thereby continuing to falsely indicate a lower need for investment. This imbalance, which is being accentuated over time, means that planned capacity is falling short of what is required. In 2012 patronage had already exceeded the industry forecast for 2019 and therefore needs revising as a matter of some urgency to redress the lack of investment in rolling stock and track infrastructure. Rail is a key lever to realising economic potential and investment is needed to:

- Significantly improve resilience at locations where there has been repeated weather-related disruption; and
- Provide additional rolling stock and infrastructure improvements needed to cater for likely future growth and unleash the region's massive untapped economic potential.

Strategic National Corridors

Strategic National Corridors have been developed by the DfT to promote connectivity by road and rail between cities in the UK. Strategic National Corridor status prioritises resources to improve connectivity

DfT spending per head of population for the South West fell by £32 to £212 per head of population between 2006/07 and 2010/11 while the UK average has risen by £41 to £363 per head of population over the same period is evidence of the disparity that exists between regions.[2]

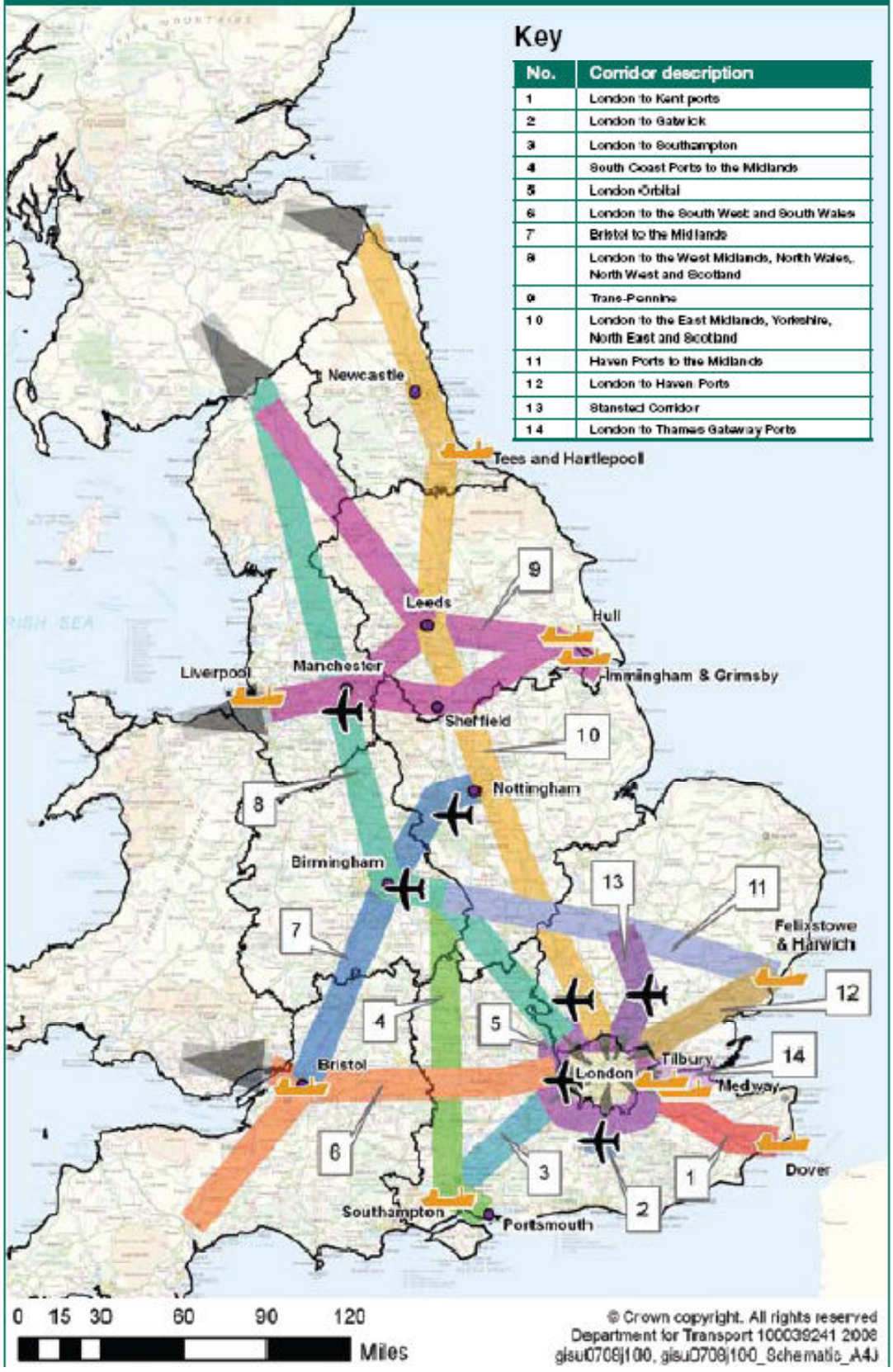
HS2 and rail electrification will increase the disparity. The anticipated cost of HS2 is £43bn. This level of expenditure in rail to reduce journey times between the north of England and London is in stark contrast to the lack of investment in any named improvement schemes announced earlier this year by Network Rail in their Strategic Business Plan to improve the rail network in the south west over the next five years. (Network Rail have just published its study on proposals to spend £31m to improve resilience on the Western Route) The south west population is 2.2m and supports 900,000 jobs and has a Gross Value Added of £36bn.

The Far SW (Somerset, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall) is sometimes dismissed as a sleepy backwater. The Far SW has low economic productivity with long rail journey times to London. Despite this the south-west has achieved high growth since 1999 but how much more could it achieve with greater investment.

The plan below shows the DfT's network of Strategic National Corridor. You will note that Plymouth and Cornwall hardly make it onto the DfT's SNC map, let alone actually designating road and rail routes into Plymouth as being on a Strategic National Corridor.

[2] Office of National Statistics 2013

Figure 4.1 Strategic National Corridors



The Rationale for including Plymouth on the network of Strategic National Corridors:

- To strengthen the business case for investment in better connectivity;

- The existing network of Strategic National Corridors comes as far as Exeter which is neither a strategic port, strategic airport and is significantly smaller than Plymouth.
- Difficult to understand why so much of the south-west peninsula is left un-served with Plymouth 15th ranked city in England ranked by size of population
- Plymouth is committed to maintaining projected growth and therefore its importance to the prosperity of the sub-region and South West peninsula
- Plymouth is the largest city in England with no direct road or rail connections which are on the network of Strategic National Corridors.
- Plymouth is a designated port on the Trans-European Network, a criterion that is explicitly stated when considering where SNCs should be designated.
- Economic growth would be severely jeopardised by lack of connection to the SNC network, given that peripherality is already recognised as a primary inhibitor of economic activity.
- The definition of corridors has the potential to stifle growth in Plymouth, with developers preferring locations that are more likely to receive more investment to deliver better connectivity.
- Connecting Plymouth to the SNC Network would make a clear statement from Central Government to the private sector that they expect the area to be led by business growth and is vital for business confidence**.**

What has the Council been doing to improve Physical Connectivity?

Campaign to include Plymouth on the UK's network of Strategic National Corridors

The Council has previously responded to the Government consultations on Strategic National Corridors in 2008 and again in December 2010 seeking inclusion of Plymouth on the network of Strategic National Corridors. Those responses included the issue of the need to invest to improve rail resilience and a commitment to achieve journey times of 3 hours between Plymouth and London far more frequently. The Government's response declined to extend the network to include Plymouth, suggesting that this should be pursued through our LEP. A Council Motion of Notice was passed earlier in 2013: "Council believes Plymouth should be on the UK Strategic Corridor and will campaign to this end." Again the Secretary of State in his response.....

Plymouth Rail Franchise Task Force Group

This Task Force was created in July 2011 in response to the announcement that DfT were going to refranchise the Great Western network, the process starting almost immediately. The Task Force, a cross party group of local MPs, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Plymouth University commissioned work demonstrating the economic case for improved rail services to and from the city for submission to both the DfT and potential train operating companies and engaging with both to press for better rail services. Up until the cancellation of the franchise process in 2013, the revised train service specification had mandated the provision of an additional train providing a 3 hour journey from London to Plymouth arriving at 10.00am. The interim franchise awarded by DfT in October 2013 has reverted to the existing timetable and no service improvements are envisaged for the next two years. In recognition that the ask extends beyond just the franchising process but to all aspects of investment in infrastructure covering the whole of the peninsula, it was considered in 2013 that the Plymouth Rail Franchising Task Force should be widened to become a Peninsula Rail Task Force

Peninsula Rail Task Force

The Peninsula Rail Task Force has been established in 2013 to represent the railway aims and aspirations of the five South West Peninsula Local Transport Authorities. A key foundation of the PRTF remit is to work on the issues in common, and to achieve the joint aims of the peninsula across the five councils.

It recognises that these needs have not been sufficiently met in the past by national rail programmes and franchises, and is committed to lobby for, and promote, the need for more government investment in the South West Railway to ensure that lack of investment in the railway does not have an adverse effect on the South West economy or people's travel needs.

The key aim is for fairer and more effective investment in the South West Railway to meet the following requirements:

- ***A fully resilient railway***, with sufficient investment to ensure that connectivity is not lost through repeat disruption events, and with an effective diversionary route from Exeter via Yeovil to Castle Cary
- ***Rail Connectivity fit for a population of 2.2m*** in a region with a potentially dynamic economy, with (a) London direct, (b) Bristol and beyond.
- ***Train journey times to London that are fully comparable*** with other cities of a similar distance on mainlines.
- ***No Stand still railway:*** sufficient train capacity to grow the economy and to prevent choking off passenger growth on local and main lines, throughout the new Franchise periods, in full recognition of the high and sustained passenger growth since 2000.
- ***Quality rolling stock*** that is comparable to the average in UK, ending the role of the South West as the final deployment of old rolling stock before being scrapped.

Wifi on Long Distance Trains

Free WiFi has now been promised as part of the revised franchise arrangements for Great Western franchise. However, many long distance services across the country already have wifi as standard. Moreover, the poor mobile phone signals along much of the route, including towards London in Wiltshire, makes it difficult for business passengers and others to use the longer journey time of the South West routes into London, compared to all other routes into London, productively. This is something that still needs addressing

Western Rail Access to Heathrow Airport

A more direct link to Heathrow Airport via Slough on the GWML has been identified as a longer-term aspiration. PCC will support the project team that is progressing this scheme and the ITT needs to recognise the need for the franchise holder to develop and support the RUS recommendation to deliver this infrastructure in the longer term.

Electrification

One of the important conclusions to emerge from Network Rail's electrification Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) and highlighted in the Council's consultation response to the Electrification RUS was that following completion of electrification on the GWML, the electrification of the Cross-Country route from Bromsgrove to Plymouth had (Table 6.5 in NR Electrification RUS) a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 5 to 1. Electrifying the B&H between Newbury and Cogload Junction (Taunton), to fill the gap and allow electric trains to use the Cross-Country wires from Taunton, to make Paddington/Plymouth all electric, had a positive financial (business) case (Table 6.5) and the BCR was described as "effectively infinite". The franchise renewal should not ignore electrification into the far SW and the DfT needs to encourage bidders to develop proposals for additional electrification schemes to see completion within the franchise period of electrification to Plymouth. A spin off benefit of electrifying the B&H route is the provision of a diversionary

route during engineering possessions of the electrified GWML between London and Cardiff, enabling maintenance of performance on GWML and West of England services in those circumstances where one line is out of action.

The progressive extension of the electrified network will raise passenger demand further, aka "the Sparks Effect" and that this additional growth will not just be confined to the newly electrified lines. Clearly sufficient rail capacity and rolling stock will be required to accommodate this growth.

There must be a question over the future operation of the existing HST train fleet beyond 2020 as there will be a need for full compliance with PSM TSI and the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations; unless derogations can be obtained, otherwise the ongoing operation of the HSTs may involve expensive modifications.

We share the widespread feeling locally, that the most recent Route Utilisation Strategy underestimated the growth likely to be seen on our local network, particularly given the massive growth seen over the last ten years in the South West with passenger growth into London growing by 4.2% per annum and the number of journeys made on the six Devon & Cornwall branch lines having more than doubled from 894,000 a year to just under 2 million passenger journeys per year.

Building the Evidence Base for rail investment

The Council, as part of its submission to the consultation on the refranchising of the Great Western Network, had an independent economic assessment of the impact of reducing journey times by rail between Plymouth and London. A journey time of 2hours 45 minutes instead of the usual 3 hours or more would generate an economic gain of £94m per year to the UK economy. [3]

The Council is also undertaking an assessment of the benefit cost ratio of extending the existing electrification programme to cover the whole route to Penzance. Electrification delivers financial benefits through operating cost savings allowing significant service enhancements to be delivered more cheaply. It is the intention for the Council to publish this report shortly.

Digital Connectivity

Introduction

Plymouth's remote location often acts as a barrier to the production of many physical products and services. The same barriers do not apply to digital products and services however. In fact Plymouth's great existing connectivity, excellent quality of life and strong existing creative/digital and ICT base provide a significant strategic opportunity for the city to exploit high value global digital markets and attract inward investment from individuals and businesses who seek a better lifestyle.

Increasing utilisation of the internet is a win-win for citizens, the Council and the economy. It can make the City more equal and prosperous while enabling better and more efficient public services. It is also the most effective means at the disposal of the Council to ensure the continued private sector investment which will be required to keep Plymouth ahead of the curve.

Plymouth is among the ten best locations in the UK for superfast broadband. By 2014 Plymouth will also be one of a small group of UK cities to offer free public Wi-Fi access which will enable citizens to access the internet from their mobile phones or laptops computers across certain parts of the city.

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[3] Economic study into rail services for Plymouth (2011) Steer Davies Gleave Transport Consultants

The internet has revolutionised the way we live and work and if anything the rate of change and impact on society is set to accelerate further. The critical challenge for the Council is to ensure that this opportunity is maximised and open to everyone.

Why is digital connectivity important for Plymouth?

The list below is a selection of the benefits that were identified by a PricewaterhouseCoopers study in 2009.

Consumer benefits:

- Households that are offline are missing out on savings of £560 per year from shopping and paying bills online.

Education benefits:

- Home access to a computer and the internet can improve children's educational performance.

Employment benefits:

- Unemployed people who get online could increase their chances of getting employment with an estimated lifetime benefit of over £12,000 for every person moved into employment.
- People with good ICT skills earn between 3% and 10% more than people without such skills.
- By 2020 90% of all jobs will require ICT skills.

Improved government efficiency:

- Each contact and transaction with government switched online could generate savings of between £3.30 and £12.00.

The issue of enabling wider connectivity to transform public services is and will become increasingly more critical for the Council, particularly to enable welfare reform and to enable those in residential care and hospitals the opportunity to live independently in their homes for longer. In addition to increasing service quality and lifestyle the financial savings from this shift could be enormous.

An example of the kind of support on offer can be found at the following link
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-22984876

Is Plymouth well connected digitally?

Wired connectivity

Plymouth punches well above its weight in terms of connectivity. Plymouth City Council through the Digital Plymouth Partnership is working hard to create the right conditions to maintain this advantage by stimulating demand for connectivity and working with the private sector to enable and lever investment.

Plymouth has an average broadband speed of 14.4 megabits per second, so is in the top 20% nationally for average internet speed. Superfast broadband (30 megabits and above) is available to 93% of city, placing Plymouth in the top 10% nationally. To provide an example of what this means in practice, this is quick enough to download a feature film in six minutes or a song in two and a half seconds.

There are however still small pockets of the City where substandard connectivity exists. Nationally the market often fails to deliver high grade connectivity to business parks and this also applies in Plymouth. There are also certain small areas of the city where the cost of upgrading services outstrip the commercial case created through local demand. For such areas there are a number of solutions that are in the process of being delivered. Firstly BT is in the middle of a programme of upgrades, secondly Plymouth City Council is a partner in the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme which will connect other areas of the City. These two programmes will last three to four years and what poor connectivity remains should be dealt with through

alternative technologies such as using wireless transmissions (for example through unused television frequencies).

If Members (or constituents) would like to find out more about specific locations then please see the leaflet produced by the Economy, Enterprise and Employment team http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/superfast_broadband.pdf

Wireless connectivity

In addition to the competitive advantage that physical connectivity provides to the City, Plymouth City Council is working to develop a wireless network which will deliver free* mobile internet access to residents by summer 2014. The network will bring Plymouth into the 21st century and will send out all the right messages for citizens, potential investors and visitors. As the network grows it could also help deliver better and more efficient public services and will become a key asset for the Council. The network will be delivered at no cost to the taxpayer by stimulating the private sector to provide an innovative and effective solution where the Council can retain control without holding risk, The first phase of the network will be rolled out in high footfall, commercially viable areas with the aim of expanding the network further, so that those most in need, without internet access will have at least a basic level of access to the internet.

**The extent of free access is to be determined. Plymouth City Council's aspiration is that there will be 24/7 access to certain critical web sites and a minimum daily allowance to the wider web (minus unsuitable content and payday loans). It is important to understand also that the signal will not penetrate buildings well and will not replicate existing high performance networks (for example in hotels and libraries).*

The growing importance of being online

The percentage of the population in Plymouth that subscribe to a wired broadband contract is 77.9%. This places Plymouth in the top 40% nationally. This however equates to 38,000 households who have no wired connection. This is important because strong uptake is critical to incentivise future upgrades to connectivity from the private sector and also because internet usage in itself is beneficial for the city, its economy and its communities.

As the importance of the internet and connectivity to our working and personal lives increases yet further so will the social and economic penalties of not being engaged. New means of connection such as smart phones and TVs will drive wider engagement and utilisation of the web but this will not reach everyone and those who find themselves excluded will become ever more disadvantaged and isolated as this gap increases.

The requirement to bridge this gap has recently become more acute, particularly for public service providers. The requirement to cut service costs is driving more and more public service delivery online – this is now enshrined at national government level through the 'digital by default' service policy (stating that all services should be delivered primarily online) which has most notably been enacted through the welfare reform agenda. As part of these reforms benefits claimants will need an online account and email address to set up and access all benefits as will job seekers.

Digital inclusion is therefore an urgent and imminent risk to delivery for many public organisations, not least Plymouth City Council that has over £4.5M invested in shifting services from face-to-face to online transactions. The risk is that 22% of Plymouth residents, most of who are the target audience for these services will be unable to access these services.

Action is therefore required to get more of the City online. The City Council, led by the Economy, Enterprise and Employment team has taken action by developing a 3 year £330,000 project (which is the largest of its kind in the UK) to ensure that more citizens can engage with the web, and in doing so create positive impacts, particularly for employability, skills and education and mitigate against the risks of welfare reform while enabling greater equality and participation.

Enabling increased digital access and skills will be of increasing importance over the coming years.

Encouraging more businesses online

The Heart of the SW Local Economic Partnership business review reported that 33% of respondents cited general IT skills as requiring improvement.

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) recently reported that for small firms an estimated 10% productivity increase is achieved from internet usage, and those SMEs with significant internet usage grow and export twice as fast as others.

Plymouth City Council through the Digital Plymouth Steering Group has worked hard to ensure that local businesses understand the benefits of broadband, by organising events and through an on-going marketing campaign. Critically, Plymouth City Council is currently negotiating a £1M package through its "City Deal" with Government to develop a significant programme of business support to help businesses trade and export online.

Recommendations

Digital Connectivity

In 2012 The Leader of the Council lobbied the Prime Minister for improved connectivity for the City and for our businesses. This lobbying will continue and is part of a wider, cross-partner Digital Plymouth programme of activity which aims to help Plymouth capitalise on the opportunity that digital connectivity provides for the city. This agenda is and will become increasing critical to enabling improvements in areas such as: enabling improved Council service provision and social care, tackling exclusion and poverty, and enabling the skills and infrastructure necessary to make Plymouth an attractive place to do business.

Digital connectivity has been recognised as one of the critical factors to develop the Plymouth Economy through the Economic Strategy Review. It is also important that connectivity is recognised and incorporated through the Plymouth Plan into the strategies and work plans of different services within the Council as a cross cutting enabler and opportunity.

Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF)

The PRTF needs to be the main channel through which rail improvements are sought. In that respect it needs to concentrate on:

Evidence

- PRTF needs to build a clear, effective and compelling case for greater investment in the railways serving the South West Peninsula.

The "Ask"

- All partners need to understand that the case will only be highly effective if the "ask" is universally agreed by all PRTF partners.

Lobbying and Communications

- The need for effective lobbying of MPs and government (ministers, DfT and Network Rail) and to ensure that the best case possible is made as well as ensuring that the means of lobbying is carried out in the most effective way.

- Effective and timely communications are required with MPs, the business community, other stakeholders, and all potential partners whose support will help build the case.

Resources

- To maintain the highest degree of effectiveness, needed to stand the highest chances of the success of the campaign, there may be a need to fund and resource elements of this work.

Network Resilience

In a similar way to the way local authorities are working in partnership to secure improvements to the rail network through the Peninsula Rail Task Force, the five local authorities and two LEPs need to build on existing partnership working to press for:

- Additional cross-organisational work between Government, the Highways Agency, Network Rail and Local Authorities to tackle issues of strategic connectivity;
- Increased funding and support for Local Authority flood risk alleviation measures; and
- Revision of the Bellwin Fund criteria to ensure that funding is more widely available to respond to future events.