

MOTION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Proposed by Councillor Tudor Evans
Seconded by Councillor Ian Bowyer

RAIL ISSUES FOLLOWING DAMAGE TO ARTERIAL LINE

This Council notes that:

- Recent events have again highlighted the inadequacies of the South West Peninsula rail network.
- The South West is **“Connectivity Poor”** with longer direct journey times than most other areas of the country which are a similar distance from London.
- The extreme weather events of the last two years and the resulting disruption to services, has demonstrated that the far south west is also **“resilience weak”**.
- The economic impact, based on previous events and our current economic analysis, when the road and rail infrastructure shut down for ten days in 2012 was estimated to be that Devon and Cornwall took a hit of £20 million per day. An on-going survey of Plymouth businesses will reveal the current impacts of the rail closure next week, with £4-5 million being predicted as the direct daily consequence on the Plymouth economy.
- The network is not fit for purpose for Plymouth as the 15th largest city in England with an ambitious growth agenda and which is delivering a City Deal. We are founding members of the Key Cities Group and are committed to ambitious regeneration plans to grow the city to over 300,000 by 2031.
- The commitment to complete a rail study needs to extend to a commitment to act on the outcomes of the study and the delivery of an additional route (known as the Dawlish Avoiding Line or GW2) to serve Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall, west of Exeter.
- All government agencies should be working co-operatively together to deliver the objectives of faster trains to the south west and a more resilient rail network overall: as opposed to agency-specific solutions that seek to protect some population centres whilst potentially prejudicing long-term rail resilience into the south west.

This Council believes that it is vital for -

- a reliable and resilient railway that is able to meet the needs of Plymouth's and the wider peninsula economy.
- increased train capacity to cater for the increasing demand for rail travel.
- better connectivity with the rest of the UK through faster trains and higher frequencies.

Plymouth City Council agrees to –

- (1) call on the Prime Minister to expedite the study into the delivery of a fast and resilient additional rail connection to the south west and Plymouth and for this to be completed and published before the end of 2014.
- (2) call on the Prime Minister to instruct the Department of Transport to immediately put Plymouth on the Department for Transport Strategic National Corridor.
- (3) call on all residents across the peninsula to write to their MP to get them to support the provision of fast and reliable trains to the south west and for them to attend the parliamentary meeting of the Rail Resilience Task Group on 25 February 2014.
- (4) call on the Department for Transport to work with Network Rail, Train Operators, local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships on a package of infrastructure improvements and options for increasing rolling stock capacity for the medium term.
- (5) call on the Department of Transport to make a firm commitment to complete feasibility and groundwork with a commitment to extending a rolling programme of electrification from 2020 that serves the entire South West Peninsula.