

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 26th March 2018



Conservative Government's failure to address South West rail resilience issues

Decades of under-investment in the South West's railways have left the region with a slow and precarious rail connection prone to regular and severe disruption. The storms in 2014 cost the region £1 billion in economic output - money which should have been spent in the South West and Plymouth economy.

Plymouth City Council therefore notes with dismay and disappointment the publication of the South West Rail Strategy - the Conservative Government's woefully inadequate response to the rail resilience issues which have been holding our City and region back for decades.

The Council notes that, although the Government received recommendations from the Peninsula Rail Task Force back in 2016, the long anticipated South West Rail Strategy completely fails to respond to the recommendations of the Peninsula Rail Task Force. The Council believes that this strategy offers almost nothing tangible to address the very real concerns of people and businesses in our City.

The Council notes that the Government has committed billions to High Speed Rail between London and the Midlands and billions to Crossrail and Crossrail 2 projects in London. Furthermore the Council notes that the Government failed to fund the £600,000 for the Network Rail study on the Plymouth to Totnes rail upgrades in 2017 that would have delivered a journey time reduction of three minutes when the track is renewed this year.

The Council expresses its frustration particularly at the Conservative Government's failure to make any firm commitment to make new money available to fund the essential upgrade to the South West rail network. Without this new money, the Council believes that Plymouth will continue to be regularly cut off from the rest of the country. This cannot be allowed to continue.

Plymouth City Council therefore:

1. Calls on the Conservative Government to match the Labour Party's commitment to make £2.5bn available to upgrade the only train line in and out of the Plymouth funding the Peninsular Rail Task Force's work plan for the next ten years.
2. Calls on Plymouth's Conservative MPs to join with the city's Labour MP in standing up to Ministers over the lack of funding for the far south west's railway in a joined-up and cross-party campaign.
3. specifically requests that the Chief Executive, as a matter of urgency, writes to the Transport Secretary and the Conservative MPs representing Plymouth alerting them to recommendation (1) and (2) above and that once a response has been received it is reported back to the first available Council meeting.

Proposer: Jon Taylor

Seconder: Mark Coker