



PENINSULA RAIL TASK FORCE

Autumn Statement reaction, Peninsula Rail Task Force comment

The news that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement has confirmed the work of the Peninsula Rail Task Force to deliver a report into the future of rail in the South West, but there is a cautious welcome for the remainder of the announcement.

Councillor Andrew Leadbetter, Chair of the Peninsula Rail Task Force said: "We have been working hard to develop the report to Government setting out our ambitions for the rail network in the South West for many months now.

"Whilst it is reassuring to see that the electrification of the main line is still continuing as it will bring indirect benefits, and likewise the Cornish resignalling, we need to understand the ramifications of a dedicated new franchise, particularly as it has been proposed without prior consultation from the Department of Transport.

"We are prepared to discuss what this might mean for the South West and how it might achieve our three point plan. We would welcome the Government offering to debate this issue but our priorities must not be compromised. We are committed to working towards greater resilience, faster journey times and sufficient capacity and that will remain paramount.

"The proposal for a new station between Castle Cary and Taunton is not new, but as we have been clear, in order to progress, Government funds would be needed to develop a business case - as well as consider the potential for Wellington too."

ends

Notes to Editors

The Peninsula Rail Task Force has been campaigning for three specific priorities for the rail network:

Resilient and reliable With faster journey times, and better connectivity And sufficient capacity and comfort.

maintaining that better connectivity is essential for growth. The adage time is money is true for a very good reason, and delays and congestion, crowded trains and patchy service all contribute to a brake on business expansion and prosperity.

ENDS

You can also find more information at: www.peninsularailtaskforce.co.uk or by contacting Coast Communications on 01579 352 600 or info@peninsularailtaskforce.co.uk

The Peninsula Rail Task Force is a rail improvement campaign group comprising Cornwall Council, Cornwall and Scillies LEP, Devon County Council, Heart of the South West LEP, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council.