



PENINSULA RAIL TASK FORCE

Statement: Peninsula Rail Task Force

As the latest report from the Transport Select Committee, "investing in the Railways" acknowledges the South West has been 'starved of investment', the South West Peninsula Rail Task Force has queried the 'Long Term Economic Plan' announced by the Chancellor and Prime Minister today.

The Peninsula Rail Task Force, a partnership of local authorities from Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay, the SW Chamber of Commerce and both LEAs has been campaigning for greater investment into the region's rail and road networks following the severe weather incidents of 2012.

Chair of the Task Force, Councillor Andrew Leadbetter said: 'Since the line was severed at Dawlish, and the floods caused major disruption across our rail and road networks last year, we have been making the point to Government that the South West has a legacy of underinvestment.

"It's not just new schemes that have fallen by the wayside - maintenance is also a problem. For every £545 the Government spends in London, it is just £41 in the South West. That is simply not acceptable.

"Our communities deserve and need a functioning railway. Whilst we see investment going into the North and Midlands, we are not even in the position where Dawlish is resilient and that's our lifeline. We urge the Government to heed the Select Committee report and start a serious programme of investment into our peninsula. It's not enough to say it will be 'planned for' - we need greater certainty for our businesses to grow and expand. Warm words are not going to pay for our rail.

"As local authorities and LEAs, we are working with the train operators to develop our stations and make small improvements but this rail network needs a significant injection of funds to transform it and that is not something that we can do without the Government's help. We await their response."

More about the work of the Peninsula Rail Task Force is on www.resiliencesouthwest.co.uk