



PENINSULA RAIL TASK FORCE

ON TRACK – the vision for the South West Rail Network

The Peninsula Rail Task Force has launched a consultation for its interim report on the South West rail network.

On Track sets out the vision for the peninsula and the first steps needed to achieve the programme of work, which will improve the network over the next 20 years.

Chair of the Peninsula Rail Task Force, Councillor Andrew Leadbetter said: "We have been campaigning and pressing the Government to deliver a programme of improvement for the South West rail network, creating greater resilience, faster journey times and increasing capacity. Our priority is to achieve a railway fit for the 21st Century, fit for our residents, commuters and visitors.

"Last night's incident at Dawlish with the train evacuation because of the severe weather is a timely reminder of just how urgent this situation is becoming. The rain was heavy, and the sea was not calm, but our rail network needs to be able to withstand a summer storm without issue. We cannot afford to take these situations lightly - and it is all the more reason that our campaign needs to keep up the pressure on the Government to invest.

"The Department for Transport has asked us to work with Network Rail to look at what might be needed to achieve our goal and to set out the individual projects required. This is a demanding body of work to undertake, so we are planning to complete by next summer.

"Given the game changing nature of our proposals, it is important that we provide an update on our progress so far, so that everyone has the opportunity to understand the plans, and we can also ensure that these proposals will meet the needs of our communities.

"I would urge everyone with an interest in travelling, working and living within the Westcountry to let us have your views. We need to keep challenging Government to invest in the West and commit to connectivity here, and we can make a far better case with support from our communities and businesses, so please do get involved."

The consultation will be open until 25th September before the report is presented to Minister Claire Perry in October. On Track can be downloaded from the website www.peninsularailtaskforce.co.uk. Feedback can be submitted online via the webform on the site, and through email: info@peninsularailtaskforce.co.uk Ends

For more detail about our solutions please see www.resiliencesouthwest.co.uk or contact Coast Communications on 01579 352 600 / info@resiliencesouthwest.co.uk

Notes to Editors

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.

More detail on the priorities is outlined below:

1) A resilient and reliable railway – getting to the starting line

Dawlish | OUR LIFELINE

WHAT: Enhance resilience of the existing coastal route

WHY: Network Rail is obliged under the terms of its licence to maintain or renew old assets to a modern replacement standard capable of doing the same or better job. Dawlish is essential for our rail network to survive; however we cannot wait until 2034 for the route to be safeguarded. We need this as an absolute minimum.

COST: estimated £398 -I £659m

East of Exeter Resilience

WHAT: Lengthen loops on the Waterloo line between Exeter, Yeovil and Castle Cary and a longer term solution for Bridgwater, with a barrage for the River Parrett

WHY: This will create greater resilience, providing a diversionary route to the mainline to London, and protect the line across the Somerset Levels

COST: estimated £100m

2) Faster journey times and better connectivity - upgrading performance

Improving our existing network and rolling stock

WHAT: Through modern rolling stock from Thames Valley with greater acceleration and automatic doors, enhanced signalling and track improvements in Exeter, Westbury, Reading – London areas

WHY: Improved journey time, performance and timetabling capacity for faster and more frequent trains between London and the South West – Somerset, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall

COST: estimated £1bn

Electrification – futureproofing

WHAT : Continue the planned programme of electrification from Newbury to Paignton, Plymouth and Penzance and the cross country route through Bristol to Birmingham

WHY: As the last and only region without plans for electrification, no new diesel rolling stock will be procured, so we will be running on obsolete stock by 2043 and losing £73m a year through GVA

COST: estimated £2bn (plus 66% contingency)

3) Sufficient capacity and quality – meeting passenger needs, growing expectations

West of Exeter -I Exeter to Newton Abbot

WHAT: An additional line between Exeter and Newton Abbot

WHY: As shown by Network Rail's Western Route Study, the mix of different speed trains on this section means it cannot accommodate sufficient services to meet demand, so four tracks between Exeter and Newton Abbot are required to meet capacity, providing additional resilience and reducing journey time

COST: estimated £1.49bn -I £3.1bn

West of Exeter – Northern Route Metro Link

WHAT: Implementation of a northern route via Okehampton

WHY: Expand the Devon Metro network to provide new local rail connections to Exeter and Plymouth for communities in West Devon and North Cornwall.

COST: estimated £350m -I £750m