

# **TORBAY COUNCIL**

**Please reply to:** Councillor Steve Darling

Leader of the Council

Torbay Council

Torquay Town Hall, Torquay

TQ1 3DS

**My ref:** SD/LH

**Your ref:**

**Telephone:** 01803 201201

**E-mail:** Stephen.darling@torbay.gov.uk

**Website:** www.torbay.gov.uk

Via email:

Grant Shapps MP

shappsg@parliament.uk

**Date:** 25 March 2022

---

Dear Minister

## **RE: Network Rail Delays in Torbay**

We are extremely concerned to have learnt yesterday as to a further delay on a Network Rail scheme that is currently being delivered in Torbay.

The works to replace a bridge, has meant the closure of the main road between Torquay and Paignton. The impact of this closure is immense for our economy and for our residents. Significantly this has disrupted the main bus route within the bay, which is the lifeline for many. The works commenced in the new year and were due to have finished on 8 March, which we know incorporated a two-week contingency period.

In early February, we were advised that the works would be delayed until the 8 April, which was extremely disappointing. Yesterday, we have learnt for the first time that there are still challenges, with the works delayed until 23 May 2022. This position is a complete surprise as we have not been kept informed, despite numerous attempts by officers at the Council to be updated by Network Rail.

The continued closure, with the commencement of the tourism season over Easter and the May Bank Holiday, will magnify even further the immense impact for the economy, residents and visitors in the Bay. Significantly the delay impacts upon Stagecoach, for whom the main bus route is the lynchpin serving Torbay at a time when bus operators are struggling to get passengers to re-engage with their service following the impact of Covid.

Given the multiple delays and lack of communication, you will appreciate our concerns as to what can only be described as poor project management, with a disregard as to the impact upon our economy and residents.

As the Government are the key stakeholder in Network Rail, can you please explain how such poor project management can occur that has a profound economic and wider impact on our communities in Torbay?

---

If you require this in a different format or language, please contact me.



Our first request is an ask for some mitigation activity in light of the extreme pressures that will be on our highways system and impact on public transport take up. We request that for the additional period of closure of this road that rail travel on the section of the line between Paignton, Torquay and Torre is made free to try and shift road users onto rail.

Our second request is that conversations are held with Stagecoach to consider what subsidies could be passported onto bus user for a month post the reopening of the bridge to traffic to encourage local people to use routes such as the 12 and 22 buses that are significantly impacted by this continuing closure.

We look forward to your explanation and understanding on how you hold Network Rail to account so that other communities in the country do not fall foul of poor project management that we are currently suffering from in Torbay and your consideration of the mitigation asks.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Steve Darling

Leader of the Council



Councillor Darren Cowell

Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Cabinet Member for Finance