

Council Meeting

26 September 2013

Council Motion – High Speed 2

This Council notes that the estimated costs for High Speed 2 have increased from £32 Billion to between £50 Billion and as high as £80 Billion.

In comparison, spending per head on transport infrastructure lags in the South West has significantly fallen behind compared to national rail spend.

This Council further notes that there has been unprecedented passenger growth in the South West, for example:

Patronage growth 2002-2012

Exeter/Paignton/Plymouth lines	108% increase
Plymouth/Penzance lines	184% increase
Truro lines	208% increase
Exeter/Barnstaple lines	159% increase

Torbay Council is also concerned to note that there are no plans at present to provide sufficient train capacity despite a sustained and high increase in passenger growth.

In this environment the Council feels that two key areas of concern need to be addressed.

Firstly, Modernisation:

There are currently no plans to electrify any track beyond Bristol. Electrification should be rolled out across the South West peninsular. Improved Rolling stock should accompany this work.

Secondly, Improved resilience

The South west suffers from a number of weak points, in its rail network, which can have a catastrophic impact on the network in poor weather conditions. The vulnerable points that need addressing include: Cowley Bridge Exeter, Dawlish Sea wall and Flooding on the Somerset levels.

Enhanced capacity for the Exeter to Waterloo line capacity to be enhanced to reinstate the line as a diversionary route in the event of disruption to London main line services.

In light of the above, this Council resolves to instruct the Executive Director of Operations and Finance to register our opposition to HS2 to the Secretary of State for Transport. The Government should cancel this scheme and spend a significant proportion of the monies allocated to this project to improve Rail infrastructure across the whole of England, but particularly addressing the South West of England that appears to have been left behind compared to other parts of the UK.

The Executive Director is also requested to write to Councils across Devon, Cornwall Somerset and Dorset who have a responsibility for transport advising them of this Councils actions on this matter.

Proposed by Councillor Doggett

Seconded by Councillor Darling