

NOTICES OF MOTION

Report of the County Solicitor

Recommendation: that consideration be given to any recommendations to be made to the County Council in respect of the Notice of Motion set out hereunder having regard to the relevant factual briefing/background papers and any other representations made to the Cabinet.

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The NoticeS of Motion submitted to the County Council by the CouncillorS shown below have been referred to the Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order 8(2) - for consideration, reference to another committee or to make a recommendation back to the Council.

A factual 'Briefing Note/Position Statement' prepared by the relevant Chief Officer and / or Head of Service is also included, to facilitate the Cabinet's discussion of each Notice of Motion.

### **(a) Restoring Railway Resilience (Councillor Hannaford)**

Council warmly welcomes and celebrates the restoration of the Okehampton to Exeter daily rail services after an absence of forty nine years.

After many years of strong cross party support at Devon County Council, we are especially pleased and proud that the first reopening under the governments " Restoring Your Railway Programme" has taken place at the heart of Devon.

Hopefully heralding a national railway service revival across the whole country, that will see a transformational change in commuter movements, and a substantial reduction in harmful emissions.

Council also welcomes the £50,000 to develop a business case to reinstate passenger rail links between Tavistock and Plymouth, and the new additional funding to reopen Cullompton Railway Station.

However, council is greatly concerned, that there is still an estimated huge gap in regional railway service investment of 4.5 billion for the South West Region, based on its ONS projected population over the period to 2045.

Therefore in order to continue to build upon the restoring your railway programme, increase the far South West's general connectivity, secure our railway resilience, and crucially assist with the climate emergency, council commits its active support, working with others to lobby, help facilitate, and advocate for the following projects;

- The completion of the Great Western electrification programme.

- The development of the North of Dartmoor line, connecting Plymouth, via Okehampton and Tavistock.
- Additional passing loops, and an increase in line speeds, between Exeter and Salisbury to improve journey times between Exeter and Waterloo Station.
- Encouraging and working with the logistics sector to commit to a serious switch to rail freight for the distribution of consumer goods, food, and industrial products.

Furthermore, Council resolves to make formal representations to the Government, national and regional transport bodies, the business sector, and our local Devon Members of Parliament, to secure the necessary funding and investment to progress these much needed and long awaited improvements.

### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment**

The County Council has for several years been working in partnership with its Peninsula local authorities of Cornwall Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council and Somerset County Council to make the case for investment in rail. This collaborative effort culminated in the publication of its 20-year plan for rail in 2016, which was presented by the Peninsula Rail Task Force to Government in the House of Commons. Five authorities speaking with a united voice and backed by our South West MPs has helped make significant progress in delivering a more resilient and better-connected railway with increased capacity and comfort for its passengers.

Since the report was published, over £300m investment has been secured to improve our railway, as follows:

- Over £50m investment in improving resilience of the line north of Cowley and in Somerset Levels
- Over £120m and a further £30m committed to deliver a new sea wall and promenade in Dawlish, including cliff stabilisation and rock fall shelters at tunnel portals between Dawlish and Teignmouth.
- Over £40m to reopen the Dartmoor Line between Exeter, Crediton and Okehampton
- Over £50m investment in creating 21<sup>st</sup> century maintenance depot facilities at Exeter St David's and Long Rock (Penzance), capable of servicing longer trains
- £30m Cornwall mainline re-signalling to increase capacity for better local services
- £14m refurbishment of the Sleeper Service
- New Inter-City Express Trains delivered with significantly increased seating capacity for passengers on an hourly speeded up timetable, and
- Improved rail services offering better connectivity, including:
  - 2-hourly semi-fast trains between Paddington and Exeter
  - 2 trains per hour even headway Plymouth-Penzance
  - Extra XCT services between Bristol and Exeter
  - Half hourly service Exmouth – Paignton

- New Stations Fund monies secured for Marsh Barton Station (Exeter) and Edginswell Station (Torbay)

## **Changing Rail Context**

Since the publication of the 20-year plan there have been significant impacts on the rail industry as result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has required a review of the Peninsula's rail priorities. For instance, travel patterns have changed dramatically, with fewer '9-5 workers' travelling daily to their offices and confidence in travelling on public transport reduced through fear of infection. In the South West passenger numbers have recovered stronger than in other parts of the country due to having a strong leisure and education market less dependent on commuter and business travel; however nationally revenues are significantly down and so a medium-term priority for Government is to reduce the level of subsidy.

Decarbonisation of transport and tackling climate change is now a much higher priority for local authorities. While rail is already a low carbon mode of transport, the South West has ageing diesel train fleets and so low carbon traction options, including the transfer of more road freight to rail, are key aspirations for the Peninsula region.

The Levelling Up agenda, which aims to revitalise disadvantaged communities and redress economic imbalances, has also gained a higher profile nationally. Following the recent publication of the *Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands*, it is important that the South West region, which has some of the lowest levels of productivity in the country, is also able to present a compelling case for further investment in its fragile rail network.

The above changes have accelerated the need for industry reforms with an initial focus on revenue recovery efforts post-COVID and establishing 'a strategic freight unit' to boost the sector and deliver a cleaner and greener future. Great British Railways (GBR) has been created to drive forward these reforms and Devon County Council, through its Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body involvement, will be meeting with the GBR transition team in early January 2022 as part of their call for evidence.

## **Rail Strategy Refresh**

Taking into account the changing policy context, the impact of the pandemic and rail industry reforms, the Peninsula local authorities are again working collaboratively through the Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body to refresh its Rail Strategy. Speaking with a single voice as a region, backed by South West MPs, is the most effective way to secure further investment in our railway, including the areas identified in this notice of motion.

In response to the specific proposals, the escalating costs of electrification have significantly reduced the prospects of the electrification programme extending into the South West. Despite this, the Peninsula authorities remain keen on exploring potential for discrete sections of electrification west of Newton Abbot and wishes to explore other low carbon traction options. For instance, the Peninsula

authorities are interested in the outcomes of GWR's trial of battery-powered trains on the Greenford branchline in London.

The *Restoring Your Railway* Ideas Fund monies secured by the County Council for Tavistock to Plymouth rail line is an important milestone as it means it is now formally recognised by Government as a pipeline rail industry scheme. We have seen with Cullompton Railway Station that the Ideas Fund led to it gaining Strategic Outline Business Case approval and unlocking future development funding. We are prioritising this work as the next phase of the northern route railway and hope to build on the momentum gained from the successful Dartmoor Line reopening. This was a hugely successful project showcasing what can be achieved when local authorities, the rail industry and the local community work closely together. The Tavistock to Plymouth Rail business case work involving partners will start in January 2022.

The County Council has previously made the case for passing loops west of Honiton and the infrastructure has been identified in the industry's *West of England Line Study 2020*. It remains a high priority for the Peninsula as there are multiple benefits for rail passengers achieved through strengthening the second strategic rail line into the South West. This includes:

- Improved resilience, enabling greater capacity to divert Paddington to Exeter trains via Yeovil junction
- Improved reliability of journeys, currently constrained by single line sections
- Increased frequency of services between Exeter and East Devon towns and potential for cross city services from west/north of the city through to East Devon locations

Finally, regarding freight, the South West Sub National Transport Bodies have jointly commissioned a freight strategy, which is nearing completion. The strategy includes recommendations that support mode shift of freight to rail, including establishing a plan for a network of rail freight intermodal terminals in the South West and ensuring the rail industry allocates sufficient freight train paths on the main line and diversionary routes. We will continue to develop these proposals and build this into the emerging rail strategy plans for the Peninsula.

The County Council is committed to decarbonising transport and securing improved strategic rail connections into the South West in line with what has been proposed in the notice of motion. This can be most effectively achieved through developing a Peninsula-wide Rail Strategy that is well aligned with stakeholder aspirations and responds positively to the planned Great British Railways industry reforms.

## **(b) After COP 26 (Councillor Atkinson)**

The final draft of the COP26 agreement recognises " the urgent need for multilevel and cooperative action." which is understood by those negotiating on behalf of local government to refer to governance, and mean that action should include all levels of government from local to central.

This Council

- will work with Government and Local Government networks, to make sure the COP26 text is translated into meaningful local and national programmes to reduce carbon which are supported by agreed and sufficient financing by Government;
- demands that national plans formulated by the Government are discussed and negotiated between local and devolved Governments and not imposed centrally by Government;
- demands that when the Government promotes new financial measures addressing climate change, these should be discussed with local governments and associations before implementation to ensure that the resources are used effectively at a local level and provide value for money; and
- considers the current national Government competitive approach introduced in 2010, which has introduced an array of short-term and one-off funding pots for which Councils have to dedicate resources to bidding for to access to often small pots of money is not an effective way to address action to reduce global warming.

## **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment**

Devon County Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019. The Authority convened the Devon Climate Emergency partnership with the aim of "Creating a resilient, net-zero carbon Devon – where people and nature thrive." The Devon Climate Declaration commits partners to collaborating to achieve net-zero emissions in Devon by 2050 at the latest.

Partners include all tiers of government in Devon with town and parish councils being represented by the Devon Association of Local Councils. The Devon Carbon Plan being prepared by the partnership provides the strategic overview and will nest with similar plans being developed at district and town & parish level. Carbon emissions data and activity-planning toolkits have been provided for town and parish councils to start acting alongside the strategic actions in the Devon Carbon Plan.

The Interim Devon Carbon Plan, which was prepared whilst the Devon Climate Assembly was being planned and delivered, makes clear that cooperation with national government to develop new funding streams and regulatory mechanisms will be vital to achieve net-zero.

This authority regularly communicates with government on matters relating to the climate emergency, including through the Devon Local Nature Partnership, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, the South West Energy Hub, and the Environment Board of the Association of Directors of Environment, Planning & Transport.

## **(c) Behaviour Change and Phasing Out Fossil Fuels (Councillor Hodgson)**

Further to the outcomes of COP26, which failed to secure strong commitments to phase out fossil fuels, this council will seek to support behaviour change in residents and businesses in the County by implementing initiatives modelled on the Welsh Government's One Planet Standard and associated Policies. This will include a commitment to switch funding from fossil fuel intense (e.g. new road building) projects to alternative (e.g. Active Travel) projects that will support low carbon, and healthier lifestyles.

Background information at this link -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSDnAnpaGHs>

### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment**

#### **The One Planet Standard**

The One Planet Standard encourages organisations to respect planet Earth's natural boundaries and capacities by adjusting the impacts of their activities to a level that one planet could provide for. The principle goes beyond that of a carbon footprint to include an organisation's effect on broader environmental issues – this is termed an ecological footprint. Most individuals and organisations in developed countries have an ecological footprint greater than one planet can sustain if everybody on the planet behaved in the same way.

#### **The Devon Climate Emergency**

The Devon Climate Emergency partnership recognises this 'overshoot' and the interlinked nature of the climate and ecological emergencies. It has the aim of "Creating a resilient, net-zero carbon Devon – where people and nature thrive."

The Interim Devon Carbon Plan contains actions to increase residents' and organisations' awareness of how they can reduce their impact on climate change and the natural environment. The communications channels of the Devon Climate Emergency projects, funded by this Authority, and the communications activity of its partners are continuing to do this.

The Plan also describes how investment needs to occur in technologies and approaches that will enable the transition to net-zero, alongside behaviour change, and create healthier lifestyles.

#### **Reprioritising Funding**

This authority has not allocated funding within the capital programme to new road building schemes for the past three years and has no plans to do so in its five-year forward plan.

Funding for public infrastructure from government comes with specific spending priorities and outcomes which currently limit the extent to which funding can be

redirected. However, attitudes are changing – the opportunity to bid for the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the decarbonisation of buildings and active travel schemes are examples.

This Authority is leading the development and testing of tools to assess the carbon emissions from highways maintenance and construction activity. Having worked that out, new materials and approaches are being designed to do these jobs with fewer carbon emissions.

#### **(d) Community Composting Initiatives (Councillor Hodgson)**

In the spirit of COP 26 to reduce the carbon footprint of waste recycling, this Council will encourage and support community composting initiatives that are supported by Parish Councils in the County.

#### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment**

The County Council has supported Community Composting for a number of years. A composting credit is currently paid to registered groups at a rate of £33 per tonne of garden waste received. On average the groups compost approximately 1000 tonnes a year, and last year were paid circa £33,000.

Through Community Action Groups (CAG) Devon, funded by DCC, composting events for the community have been held recently to support and advise those wishing to carry out composting. On October 16th Sustainable Bishop and CAG Devon co-hosted a successful Dr Compost event attended by 20 people. Further details can be seen on the CAG Devon website Getting your hands dirty with Dr Compost! - CAG Devon. A second Dr Compost session was held on 20th November at Knightshayes attended by 22 (including 3 NT staff). Both events were very well received.

There are plans to update the RecycleDevon community composting guidance which currently signposts to the Devon Community Composting Network site. There are also plans to offer simple advice with regards to planning issues.

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This Report has no specific equality, environmental, legal or public health implications that will not be assessed and appropriate safeguards and/or actions taken or included within the detailed policies or practices or requirements in relation to the matters referred to herein.

ANDREW YENDOLE

[Electoral Divisions: All]

#### **Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

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| <b><u>Background Paper</u></b> | <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>File Reference</u></b> |
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