

Railfuture South West (Devon & Cornwall and Severnside regional branches) response to Peninsula Transport draft Strategic Implementation Plan

What do you think of the Peninsula Transport Strategic Implementation Plan? Strongly support.

Does the SIP align with the priorities set out within the Peninsula Transport Strategy? Yes.

When considering the schemes identified within the SIP, which themes are most important to you?

Accessibility / Active travel / Bus and coach / Climate resilience / Digital and technology improvements / EV infrastructure / Freight / Rail / Road – while first and foremost a pro-rail organisation we recognise the complementary roles of all other themes as important contributors in the integrated transport mosaic.

Do you agree that the projects in the SIP delivery plan will help by driving economic growth and help the South West peninsula to prosper? Strongly support

Do you have any other general comments on the Peninsula Transport SIP?

1. We note that 10 of the 15 Tier One Region-Wide ‘High priority’ schemes are rail – this is most welcome although not wholly surprising given the present relatively limited rail network, and its potential for growth.
2. We further note that 3 of the 7 Tier Two Strategic schemes (Short-term) are rail, 7 of the 23 Tier Two Strategic schemes (Medium-term) are rail, and 5 of the 11 Tier Two Strategic schemes (Long-term) are rail. In total, 25 of the 56 schemes are rail, and all but 1 of them are categorised as “*scheme or intervention has undertaken some development work that has enabled it to be assessed*” the other being “*scheme or intervention is at an early stage of development or a case for change has been identified but no detailed scheme is available to assess.*” For a predominantly rural region with few large, albeit still regionally very significant urban centres, and a relatively limited rail network, this is a most welcome expression of the strength of commitment by the sub-national transport body to one particular sustainable mode.
3. We particularly welcome the inclusion of our principal – two-part – regional campaign in northern Devon:
~ North Devon Line (Signal and route upgrades to enable reduction in journey times from Exeter Central to Barnstaple to 59 mins. Additional 1tph Barnstaple - Exeter service) as a Tier One Region-wide scheme – “*strategic, benefit the wider peninsula, perform well against the five vision goals, four strategy outcomes and are credible, deliverable schemes.*” and
~ Bideford to Barnstaple rail extension (Relaying track from Barnstaple to Bideford to extend existing services) as a Tier Two Strategic scheme (Long-term) – “*assessed as strategic in nature and merit inclusion in the region SIP ... They are strategic for the respective promoters or relevant stakeholders and are critical to growth of the region.*”
However, unlike the generic description in the draft SIP for Long-term schemes, this particular one is indeed cross-boundary (between four current Districts – Torridge, North Devon, Mid-Devon, Exeter) and is most certainly multi-stakeholder driven, through the December 2023-established Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance (NDRDA) and its currently two dozen partner and stakeholder organisations.
4. We also welcome the inclusion of South West Mobile Connectivity as a Tier One Region-Wide scheme.
5. Within the ‘Digital and technology improvements’ theme an additional Tier One Region-Wide scheme, to complement the new Peninsula Railcard as the extension of the Devon & Cornwall Railcard, should be the early extension across Devon of digital rail ticketing; we welcome its delivery within the Mid-Cornwall Metro.

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS – Board Director for Infrastructure & Networks, Acting Convener for NDRDA

SUB-RWB-20250303-A

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk