

Peninsula Rail Task Force
MP Briefing
26 November 2024
Old Oak Common Impacts on South West and South Wales

Purpose

To set out the issues created by the Old Oak Common interchange project and the serious economic impacts to South West and South Wales, alongside the wider rail network.

About Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF)

The Peninsula Rail Task Force represents the five Local Transport Authorities covering Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay with 3 million resident population and over 20 million visitors annually. Underpinning PRTF's work are our aims for:

- **Resilience and reliability**
- **Network expansion and enhancement**
- **Enhanced passenger experience and patronage growth**

Background

Current plans show that the impact of the construction of the new station at Old Oak Common will have a detrimental impact on mainline inter-city services serving the M4 corridor, South Wales and the South West. This is set to last for 7 or more years and follows the 10 years of disruption to our rail services resulting from the electrification of the main line and the construction of the Elizabeth Line.

Key impacts from Old Oak Common

The planned works to Old Oak Common will:

- Ensure that our journeys **are among the slowest intercity services** anywhere in the country
- Severely reduce the number of available seats, diminishing our already poor capacity and connectivity
- Result in fewer direct trains to London Paddington with limited line capacity – reducing our resilience to recover from any delays

Views

We appreciate the government's efforts to maximise the positives of HS2.

We would respectfully point out that the South West and South Wales will not directly benefit; we are deeply concerned that this is yet another blow to our train services and our economies, largely for the benefit of other regions.

The view from DfT, the rail operators and Network Rail is that we will 'make it work'. But the South West – and South Wales – has been taking the brunt of projects to benefit the capital, the Midlands and the Northern regions for over a decade. Whilst it is clear that the new government has high ambitions for our regional growth – and ones we share - we cannot accept that other regions continue to prosper at the cost of our own.

Recommendations

Our call is for the Secretary of State for Transport to ask / instruct the Office of Road and Rail to urgently undertake a formal study to identify the impacts of the planned works and outline the actual consequences. This would then be used to inform the development of a programme of measures to avoid further regional disparity and mitigate the impact of the disruption caused by the construction of Old Oak Common over the next seven years.

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