



Press release

Cornwall welcomes major package of rail improvements

3 July 2014

Cornwall Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership have welcomed the announcement of a multi-million pound package of rail improvements that will lift the local economy, create new jobs and provide faster train journeys.

Announcing details of the £146.6m investment at Penzance Prime Minister David Cameron said: **"Ensuring that we have first class infrastructure across Britain is a crucial part of our long-term economic plan to back business, create jobs and provide a brighter future for hardworking people. This investment, which will boost the local economy and improve connectivity, is great news for Cornwall, the South West and beyond."**

The deal will ensure:

- the interior of the Night Riviera Sleeper trains, which run between Penzance and London - one of only two sleeper services in the UK - will be completely overhauled;
- the Long Rock train maintenance site at Penzance will be expanded to maintain Cornwall's sleeper trains, safeguarding jobs and creating new training opportunities; and
- a major programme of signalling improvements will start five years earlier than planned, providing faster journeys between Penzance and Totnes and paving the way for the potential introduction of half-hourly services on the Cornish mainline.

Bert Biscoe, Cornwall Council's Cabinet Member for Transport and Waste, said: **"This is important news for Cornwall. We have been working closely with the LEP and First Great Western to improve our rail services and are delighted that the Government is supporting our plans.**

"The re-signalling will bring opportunities for public transport over the next century which means that it is a significant project comparable to dualling the A30. It will change the way in which Cornish communities can get about the place, and will affect the economy, the environment and our everyday lives. The Sleeper will provide reliable early morning access to London to complement the air link, while the maintenance facility is a welcome investment in Cornwall's aptitude for engineering and railways."

Chris Pomfret, Chair of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP, said: **Transport connectivity is always one of the first issues identified by the business community as a barrier to Cornwall's economic growth. This investment makes a major step forward in addressing this issue through an enhanced sleeper service and potentially a more regular and resilient link to London and the rest of the country.**

"Perhaps, just as importantly, is that this is a real demonstration of a council and LEP and the two relevant rail bodies and the Department for Transport working together to produce a solution that benefits all parties, but most particularly, the people of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly."

The package includes £9m of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), £29.6m secured through Cornwall Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), £103.5m from Network Rail and £4.5m from train operator First Great Western.

More than 6.5m passengers use the rail network in Cornwall every year, with passenger numbers growing twice as fast as the national average.

Patrick Hallgate, Network Rail's Western route managing director, said: **"The South West has a vibrant economy which is experiencing staggering growth in**

demand for rail travel. That can only be supported by putting in the best possible connections to the rest of the country. Network Rail is proud to be playing a part in that success story."

Mark Hopwood, First Great Western managing director, said: **"At First Great Western we have a great track record of working with local authority partners and the wider rail industry to deliver significant improvements of real economic value for the communities we serve. This package enhances the improvements already planned to the Night Riviera sleeper to a whole new level, providing top class accommodation and introducing a brasserie-style bar area."**

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