Dear Chair,

Follow-up to hearing of 5 June

As promised, I am writing to you with further detail on some of the issues that were raised by the Committee on 5 June at your hearing on Transport Infrastructure in the South West. Jim O’Sullivan is writing to you separately on the issues he promised to follow-up on strategic roads.

Great Western Main Line resilience

The Committee asked for more information about the work to improve the resilience of the Great Western Main Line in South Devon.

We are absolutely committed to improving the resilience of the railway line between Exeter and Newton Abbot. As you know, work has now started on a new sea wall at Dawlish. Up to £80m has been provided by the Government for two phases of work. The first phase stretches from Boat Cove/Kennaway Tunnel to the Colonnades, and will be completed in early 2020, including a break in work during the peak summer season.

The second phase will extend the new sea wall from Colonnades to Coastguard’s Ramp, including Dawlish Station. This phase is currently in design and will require local authority consent for any changes affecting the station, which is Grade 2 listed. This being forthcoming, work is expected to start on site in Spring 2020 and be finished by Spring 2021.

Network Rail is continuing to develop solutions for other elements of the South West Rail Resilience Programme, using £15m previously announced by the Government in 2016. This includes protection for the railway between the tunnels at Dawlish, and from the soft steep cliffs along the coast at Teignmouth.

The proposed solution between Teignmouth and Holcombe/Parsons Tunnel involves a realignment of the railway. This will require the submission of a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO). Network Rail is currently consulting with local communities as part of the development of the TWAO application, which they aim to submit next year.
Funding for delivery of these further elements of the South West Rail Resilience Programme will be subject to the production of a robust business case, in accordance with the principles of the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline.

**Great Western signalling upgrades**

The Committee asked about changes to signalling on the Great Western Main Line. Network rail has recently completed a signalling upgrade of the Cornish mainline (between Plymouth and Penzance) in preparation for the 2019 timetable changes. Network Rail has provided the Department with a Long Term Deployment Plan showing when European Train Control System (digital signalling) is proposed to be introduced across the rail network. Digital signalling offers improved capacity, reliability and safety benefits and requires both the track and the train to be upgraded. This Plan is due to be published by Network Rail shortly. It suggests that Network Rail has no plans to upgrade the signalling to digital on the Great Western route until the late 2020s/early 2030s.

**Membership of South West Sub National Transport Bodies (STBs)**

In the South West local authorities have aligned themselves in two STB groupings Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway. The Committee asked about their membership. Details are set out below.

**Peninsula Transport**

Constituent Authorities (including Board representatives):

- Cornwall Council (Cllr Geoff Brown)
- Devon County Council (Cllr Andrea Davis)
- Plymouth City Council (Cllr Mark Coker)
- Somerset County Council (Cllr John Woodman)
- Torbay Council (Cllr Mike Morey)

Associate Members: Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP, Heart of the South West LEP, DfT, Network Rail, Highways England, Homes England, Isles of Scilly Council, Western Gateway STB.

**Western Gateway**

Constituent Authorities (including Board representatives):

- Bath and North East Somerset Council (Cllr Neil Butters & Cllr Joanna Wright) (job share)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council (Cllr Andy Hadley)
- Bristol City Council (Cllr Kye Dudd)
- Dorset Council (Cllr Ray Bryan)
- Gloucestershire County Council (Cllr Nigel Moor)
- North Somerset Council (Cllr James Tonkin)
- South Gloucestershire Council (Cllr Stephen Reade)
- West of England Combined Authority (WECA) (Mayor Tim Bowles)
- Wiltshire Council (Cllr Bridget Wayman)

Associate Members: Transport and Business Forum Chair (LEP representative), DfT, Highways England, Network Rail, Homes England, Peninsula Transport STB.
I hope this is useful.

Yours sincerely,

Bernadette Kelly CB
Permanent Secretary