

The rationale for the government announcement threatening cancelation of funding for the restoration of Plymouth to Tavistock line is ill founded

Just 1% of the funds will allow the completion of the line's restoration business case and acquire the necessary GRIP report (Governance for Railway Investment Projects). The Tavistock - Plymouth restoration does not need 99% of the final funding until 2028/9. Seed funding of this project will allow this preparatory work to proceed to time.

The case for the timely restoration for the Tavistock to Plymouth line:

1. The Tavistock line is the most significant infrastructure project to address urban deprivation in Plymouth which is one of the most deprived city areas in Southern Britain.
2. Transport infrastructure projects are acknowledged to be one of the most effective ways to 'level up' low income/poor economy areas.
3. Rachel Reeves has said that while borrowing to fund ongoing govt. expenditure is misguided, it is wholly acceptable to borrow to fund capital expenditure, when a significant economic benefit will follow.
4. It is widely accepted that the country needs a long-term transport investment plan* that doesn't chop and change. Given the real benefit the Tavistock line will bring to Plymouth, continuing the stop-start-stop approach to this project will do untold harm.

** 'Public transport is a key enabler of economic, environmental and social prosperity' (the Institution of Civil Engineers, 2023).*

** 'The need to move away from sticking plaster solutions and towards a sustainable funding model for public transport' (Institution of Civil Engineers)*

Politically the last thing the Labour MPs will want hanging over them during the 2028/9 run up to the next election will be responsibility for fracturing plans to restore vital transport links between Plymouth and Tavistock. A winning electoral asset will be turned into an electoral millstone.

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