

## STATEMENT FROM TEIGNMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

In response to enormous public concern Teignmouth Town Council request an immediate review be undertaken in conjunction with local stakeholders and councils to consider all engineering options to defend the railway, improve public safety and to reduce the negative impact on local communities, businesses and the environment.

Teignmouth Town Council welcomes the work undertaken by Network Rail ( NR ) to improve the resilience of the railway from Eastcliff to Parsons Tunnel. A reliable rail service is vital to thousands of users in the coastal towns and South West England beyond Exeter. Public consultations have shown the scale of the threat from Woodlands Landslip and the risks of sea level rise and severe storms for future proofing for 2065 to 2100.

Communities of the resort towns of Teignmouth and Dawlish and many of our visitors have raised concerns that the NR plans are flawed. Councillors have received more correspondence about this than any other subject. This stretch of coast and the railway have enormous significance as a heritage of Brunel and the GWR, a consideration which NR has sidestepped with a Certificate of Immunity (12 April 2018) from Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The sea wall is as historic as the Royal Albert Bridge over the Tamar and the Clifton Suspension Bridge, but the project team is proposing designs that are both sub-optimal and brutalist in design.

To avoid an unacceptable, prolonged closure of the line local communities and visitors will have to accept disruption of the coastal path to enable the import of enormous quantities of cement and aggregate by sea. Further, respondents complain that an environmental impact assessment has still to be undertaken. The damage to biodiversity, amenity, and the loss of beach material that a higher seawall would generate through scour is unknown. The current 'big wall' design has been targeted at the cheapest form of 100-year protection but since the projections for climate change impact are highly variable, a more holistic, flexible approach should now be considered.

We would therefore request that a review be immediately undertaken in conjunction with local stakeholders and councils to consider all engineering options to defend the railway, improve public safety and to reduce the negative impact on local communities, businesses and the environment. The review could benefit NR by delivering not only greater line resilience and service reliability, but by encouraging more members of the public to travel by rail for the enhanced experience our coastal railway resorts could offer.