



**Stephen Kinnock**  
Member of Parliament for Aberavon



Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: SNK/CM

07 August 2017

Dear Chris,

**Re: Electrification of Great Western Main Line**

I am writing to you about your announcement to abandon plans to electrify the Great Western Main Line between Cardiff and Swansea. It is a decision that has left me and my constituents angered and frustrated.

Countless times over the last few years the Government, either through the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Transport or Secretary of State for Wales, has given assurances that rail electrification would reach Swansea. I received a guarantee from the Secretary of State for Wales that electrification would reach Swansea in October 2015. My constituency of Aberavon would have been a beneficiary of this with a station on the Great Western Main Line.

My constituents have contacted me about your decision to renege on this promise and have expressed sentiments that your decisions has left them feeling like 'second class' citizens, that it 'demonstrates the contempt that is felt for our local area where it is acceptable for us to put up with a second tier service', and that it has put the region at a 'significant disadvantage.' I whole heartedly agree with the sentiments that they have made to me.

The way in which this decision was communicated, through the press in the form of an article in the Western Mail, was disgraceful. On top of that it was done on the last day of Parliament sitting before the summer recess, without any Ministerial Statement, and not allowing for the tabling of any Urgent Questions for consideration by the Speaker. This was a clear attempt to avoid any form of Parliamentary scrutiny and it is shameful. It demonstrates a clear disregard for the House and for the public by denying MPs the opportunity to make representations on behalf of constituents.

You have justified this decision in terms of new technology, disruption and cost. Bi-modal trains are not a new technology and the continued used of diesel operated trains west of Cardiff will have an effect on the air quality, noise, carbon emission and the greater long term operation and maintenance costs.

Tel: 01639 897660

Unit 7  
Water Street Business Centre,  
Water Street, Port Talbot, SA12 6LF

Email: [stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk)  
[www.stephenkinnock.co.uk](http://www.stephenkinnock.co.uk)  
Twitter: @SKinnock



**Stephen Kinnock**  
Member of Parliament for Aberavon



Since electrification had been announced my constituents have experienced disruption on the line and were content to put up with this for the benefit of electrification in the long term.

For years Wales has been denied proper investment in our railways, your decision has effectively continued this tradition of failing to invest in our railways. It also smacks of hypocrisy when you are able to find billions for HS2 but are not willing to spend far less on the electrification between Cardiff and Swansea.

Further insult has been added to injury when you then went on to announce plans for Crossrail 2 with costs estimated as being up to £30bn. On one day you are saying that we don't have the money to invest in the line west of Cardiff and then you find billions for another line benefitting London. How does this square with the Prime Minister's stated 'mission to make Britain a country that works for everyone'? It looks very much like Wales is footing the bill for further rail enhancements for London.

Failure to invest in this vital infrastructure now will also have long-term consequences for the line, restricting the types of rolling stock that can be used on the line in the future, both for inter-city services and for the Wales and Borders franchise.

The repercussions of this decision will be felt much further afield with knock-on effects felt in the local economy, negatively influencing potential investment and jeopardising future social and economic investment. With the Swansea Bay City Region deal and the tidal lagoon in the pipeline, significant work has been undertaken to encourage economic growth in the south west Wales area, this good work could be undone by the Government's failure to back the area.

Ultimately it will result in inconsistency across the rail network with parts of the UK receiving HS2, some with electrification and others lagging behind with diesel trains. The latter is what you have condemned south west Wales to.

I strongly urge you to reconsider this decision and electrify the Great Western Main Line to Swansea.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Kinnock  
Member of Parliament for Aberavon