

Ken Skates AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P-05-820  
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01381/18

David John Rowlands AM  
Chair - Petitions committee.

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

01 June 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 9 May regarding Petition P-05-820 Don't take Neath off the main railway-line.

Rail infrastructure is reserved to the UK Government.

I believe the concerns raised in the petition are as a direct result of an earlier non-government proposal by Professor Mark Barry that could have taken Neath station off the main line to London. This proposal is not supported by the Welsh Government. We appreciate the importance of well-serviced rail stations to their communities and have been very clear in our position on Neath station, and indeed, many other stations in the area. We believe these stations shouldn't just be protected but enhanced.

When the Secretary of State announced in July last year that he was cancelling the scheme to electrify the railway between Cardiff and Swansea, he said that he had asked Network Rail to develop options for improving journeys for passengers in Wales. Possible schemes to improve journey times between Bristol and Swansea and to improve station facilities in Swansea were specifically mentioned.

Transport for Wales has commissioned Professor Mark Barry to develop the case for investment in the rail network in South Wales and North Wales through 'Programme Strategic Outline Cases' including individual business cases for station improvements in and around Swansea, and improving journey times and connections between Swansea and Cardiff, and between South Wales, Bristol, and London. It will be important that this work is joined up with the development of the Swansea Bay Metro and we will be looking at any proposals within the metro vision that will deliver improved infrastructure across the entire network.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

There is a long list of options for improving journey times by rail for commuters and long-distance travellers in south Wales and we will be working with stakeholders to identify what these are so we can make the best possible case to the UK Government for funding these much-needed improvements.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping flourish above the name.

**Ken Skates AC/AM**

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