

Motion for Council on 24th July 2023

On 3rd July, news outlets' warned users of railway services that they can expect to suffer yet more service cancellations because drivers are refusing to work overtime.

Members of the ASLEF Union are taking part in the action in an on-going dispute over pay and conditions.

East Midlands Railway says there will be a number of train cancellations and is urging people to check their train is running before travelling. The operator is also advising passengers to travel ahead of the last train of the day where possible.

Earlier in June the RMT announced that they will hold further strikes on Thursday 20, Saturday 22 and Saturday 29 July, which will mean hardly any services running, which will cause major travel issues across the UK as people use more cars and coaches instead of trains.

According to a report in the Guardian newspaper from 22nd November 2022

... "Analysts at the Centre for Economics and Business Research thinktank estimate that strikes alone could cost the economy almost £700m in lost output, by stopping people from getting to work who cannot do their job from home. Meanwhile, the hospitality industry says strikes could cost the sector £1.5bn, similar to the level of disruption caused by the Omicron wave of Covid last year..."

Undoubtedly the impacts have worsened significantly since then with the ongoing disruption to rail travel.

In a report on BBC News Online 3rd July 2023,

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-66084766?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA

it is stated that

*"The long-running pay dispute by train drivers centres around union members accepting a deal which would have **brought drivers' average pay to £65,000**. This offer has already been rejected by Aslef.*

But it would have been dependent on changes to working practices, which the employers and government say are needed to cut costs and modernise how the railway runs"

The **average salary in Harborough district is £35,539**, according to figures published by the ONS for 2022.

It's a fact that across the Harborough district many thousands of people every day use trains, to get to and from work, to get to colleges and universities, schools, go on holiday both out-bound and those coming to stay in the Harborough district.

This disruption caused by the apparent intransigence of 'stuck in the past' trade unionists is causing serious harm to the railway economy and also to businesses and services which rely on passing trade from rail users.

The government has invested over £57 Million of taxpayers money to upgrade Market Harborough Railway Station. Hundreds of millions is being invested into electrification of Midland Mainline- all welcomed and endorsed by this council and many others.

I therefore propose that Harborough District Council agrees with the following recommendations and actions :-

- 1) That this Council believes that this ongoing and serious disruption to the rail travelling public has now gone on long enough.
- 2) That our residents, communities and businesses in the Harborough district are being seriously adversely affected.
- 3) That the action by the Trade Unions is unwarranted.
- 4) That this Council instructs the Leader to write a letter within 7 days of this meeting, to be agreed with the Leader of the Opposition, to the heads of the railway unions and the Rail Delivery Group, with a copy of this motion, asking them how they intend to solve this dispute and to stop the serious disruption and economic damage to our district.
- 5) That a copy of that letter be sent to all District Cllrs and our 3 members of Parliament
- 6) That a copy of the responses received be cc'd to all members and to the members of parliament.
- 7) That all correspondence is published on the Council's website

Proposed by Cllr Phil King

Seconded by Cllr Simon Whelband

3rd July 2023