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2023-10-14

Dear Torrige District Council,

## **Torrige draft Strategic Plan 2023-28**

Railfuture welcomes the public consultation on the Council's draft Strategic Plan 2023-28, and offers its views and a specific contribution below.

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

We refer to the Motion agreed by the Full Council at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – see Minute 12 (a): "*That TDC, following on from the presentation made at the last Full council meeting, do support the extension of the railway line from Barnstaple to Bideford and that this aspiration is embedded in the new Joint Local Plan.*" It was seconded with a suggested amendment that the extension of the railway line from Barnstaple to Bideford also be embedded in the Economic Development Business Plan, which was agreed by the proposer and the amended Motion was then carried by an overwhelming majority.

In order to reflect that commitment in the Council's Strategic Plan for 2023-28, recognising the socio-economic benefits that rail already brings to the wider area, and that those benefits could be further embedded by restoring a link to Bideford, we advocate inclusion of this additional Priority and Actions within the 'Local Economy' theme of the final Strategic Plan:

*Priority - Develop opportunities to enhance community prosperity through improved public transport connectivity.*

*Actions by us and in partnership - Support further work on developing the business case for restoring a Bideford-Barnstaple rail link, to allow the strategic, economic and environmental case and the implications of reopening to be more fully evaluated.*

It will be seen that this also supports the Priority "*Develop Torrige to be a great place to work and build a career*" within the 'Our Council' theme.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Clark  
Railfuture  
Secretary, Devon & Cornwall regional branch

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) [www.railfuturescotland.org.uk](http://www.railfuturescotland.org.uk) [www.railfuturewales.org.uk](http://www.railfuturewales.org.uk)  
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