



Representing users of the Barnstaple to Exeter rail line

Torrige District Council
Riverbank House
Bideford
North Devon
EX39 2QG
consultation@torridge.gov.uk

Please reply to
Tim Steer

23-10-2023

Dear Torrige District Council,

Torrige draft Strategic Plan 2023-28

The Tarka Rail Association (TRA) welcomes the public consultation on the Council's draft Strategic Plan 2023-28 and offers its views and a specific contribution below.

The TRA is a voluntary organisation which exists to support and further the interests of users of the rail line, be they in Torrige, North and Mid Devon, and Exeter.

We believe that our role as an independent advocate for the line and its possible extension is particularly important and fulfil this role by developing positive engagement with existing and potential new users of the lines.

We also are working with key partners in the line, including railway companies (principally Network Rail and the train operator Great Western Railway), County, District and local councils, and other multi-agency groups, to develop a strong partnership that allows the residents and business served by the line to be represented.

We refer to the Motion agreed by the Full Council at its meeting on 13th 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.

President: Cllr Andrea Davis

Vice Presidents:

Sir Geoffrey Cox KC MP,
Julian Crow MBE, Peter Heaton-Jones,
Dr Ian Harrison. Cllr Andrew Leadbetter,
Roger Blake, Peter West OBE, Stuart Brocklehurst



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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 Torrington to be a great place to work and build a career" within the 'Our Council' theme.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Steer BA

Tarka Rail Association

Vice chair

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