



Representing users of the Barnstaple to Exeter rail line

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Dear Torrige District Council,

Torrige draft Strategic Plan 2023-28 – supplementary response

The Tarka Rail Association (TRA) in our letter of 23rd October has already welcomed the public consultation on the Council's draft Strategic Plan 2023-28, and now wishes to submit the following supplementary contribution.

That previous contribution related to the new Joint Local Plan, and we now turn to the current Local Plan 2011-31, adopted on 29th October 2018 by the Full Council.

In Chapter 4 Spatial Strategy, Policy ST10 Transport Strategy on pages 42-43 states - "The Transport Strategy for northern Devon will:

(1) Provide good strategic connectivity by:

- (c) improving journey times and service quality on the Barnstaple-Exeter rail line linking northern Devon to Exeter and the wider rail network; and
- (f) safeguarding routes and exploring opportunities for the reuse and reinstatement of former railway lines; (our underline, and as below)

(2) Meet the needs of local communities and visitors to the area by:

- (a) providing transport infrastructure that facilitates the delivery of proposed strategic extensions for housing and employment development and facilitates economic regeneration;
- (b) developing quality public and community transport networks (and supporting infrastructure) within and between Barnstaple and Bideford and the networks linking these centres to northern Devon's main towns and rural communities where viable;
- (c) improving overall accessibility of northern Devon by providing a wide range of integrated practical and attractive travel options and improving interchanges for transfer between modes of travel; and
- (f) recognising transport impacts from the seasonal nature of traffic in northern Devon.

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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- (3) Reduce the environmental and social impacts of transport by:
(a) reducing the need to travel by car and enabling alternative sustainable travel options as supported by the Local Transport Plan;”

In order to truly reflect those already-adopted Local Plan policies in the Council’s Strategic Plan for 2023-28, as well as the June 2022 commitment for the new Local Plan referenced in our previous submission, we re-affirm our advocacy for the inclusion of the following additional Priority and Actions within the ‘Local Economy’ theme of the final Strategic Plan, 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:

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.

In these very early stages of the project’s development it cannot be emphasised too strongly that there can be no valid assumptions made by anybody about the route, or any other aspects of a new rail link; the proposition for now is simply as stated: to “*support further work on developing the business case ... to allow the strategic, economic and environmental case and the implications of reopening to be more fully evaluated.*”

Yours faithfully,

Tim Steer BA
Tarka Rail Association
Vice Chair

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