

Great Western Railway Community Investment application 2022/23

The Project

Name or title of your project

Torrige and North Devon Connectivity Programme – Initial Business Case

Which category best describes your project

Research

Which station on the GWR network is closest to your project?

Barnstaple

If applicable, please supply your charity number, CIC number or registered company number

Please tell us what you would use the money for, detail why you need the funding and how this will help the local community (500 words max).

~ Money would be used towards commissioning an experienced independent specialist adviser, who has already submitted a costed proposal, to produce an Initial Business Case for the Torrige and North Devon Connectivity Programme, being spearheaded by the ACE Rail campaign which is backed by the Tarka Rail Association: <http://www.tarkarail.org/page7.html>. The ACE Rail campaign is to reconnect 'Greater Bideford' (population 31,000) and central Exeter via Barnstaple (population 33,000) with a new fast limited-stop hourly train service offering a car-competitive end-to-end journey time of 60 minutes, in addition to the existing – and consequentially accelerated – all-stations service extended to Bideford. The costed proposal for an Initial Business Case can be seen as the first entry for April 2022 in here: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Devon-and-Cornwall-Reopenings>

The Torrige and North Devon Connectivity Programme is currently seen to comprise two elements: an extension of the Tarka line and its services to Bideford, and a whole-route upgrade to deliver the additional hourly fast / limited-stop service with the mode-shifting competitive journey time. The campaign, to be validated with an Initial Business Case as the basis from which to pursue funding for a Strategic Outline Business Case as the essential next step, would therefore when eventually fulfilled help meet Community Fund criteria to increase rail travel, encourage carbon reduction, connect communities people and places, and support economic growth.

~ The funding is needed to affirm the partnership approach to the TRA-backed ACE Rail campaign, complementing the funding commitments from Railfuture, the TRA, and local County Councillors.

~ The community, of potentially over 120,000 people within the Greater Bideford and Barnstaple catchments, will first be helped by publication of authentic research which validates the vision of a reconnected Bideford and a better-connected Barnstaple. Torrige District as home to most of Greater Bideford is one of the economically lowest-achieving local authority areas not just in Devon but in the whole of the United Kingdom and while a rail link is no panacea the realistic prospect of it will motivate confidence and inspire belief at a whole-community level.

Have you got any other funding to put towards the project? If so, please tell us who it is from and how much it is.

Yes, from Railfuture Ltd £5,000, and from Tarka Rail Association £500.

Please provide a breakdown of costs for the amount you are requesting, including the total cost of the project and the cost of each element and make clear if these are actual costs or estimates.

Total actual cost of the Initial Business Case is £12,000 including VAT. With £5,500 funding support already committed, the balance of £6,500 is anticipated to be further part-supported by some local Devon County Councillors' Locality Budget Funds. The Community Fund is therefore requested to make a matching contribution towards the £6,500 balance.

Will your project deliver physical infrastructure at a railway station or on railway land?

No.

Are any permissions or consents required to deliver your project? Such as Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent or Local Authority permissions. If so please outline the consents you believe will be needed.

No.

When will you be able to start the project?

Within a month of full funding being confirmed.

How long will your project take to deliver?

Four months.

Can you think of anything that might prevent the project from happening? What is the biggest risk to its completion? 50 words maximum.

Raising the full £12,000 would only delay, not prevent the project from happening. The biggest risk to its completion would be the premature demise of the commissioned adviser!

How would you manage this? 100 word maximum.

Seek a replacement specialist.

Contact Telephone Number:

Contact Address:

Declaration

Box ticked to confirm understood and agreed.

First name:

Tim

Last name:

Steer

Email:

flintlinden@hotmail.co.uk

Organisation name:

Tarka Rail Association.