



North Devon Council & Torrige District Council

Report Date: 15th July 2022

Topic: RE-INSTATEMENT OF BIDEFORD TO BARNSTAPLE RAIL LINK

Report by: SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland; Head of Place Property and Regeneration, North Devon Council

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Both Councils have received a presentation from Tim Steer, Director of Bideford Railway Heritage centre and ACE Rail lead regarding the proposed re-instatement of a Bideford to Barnstaple rail link for passenger and other services.

1.2. This was heard at North Devon Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on the 4th April 2022 and Torrige District Council's Full Council meeting on the 11th April 2022.

1.3. This report seeks to update this Committee on the motions that have been passed by both Councils following this presentation and to ensure it is reflected in work on the People and Place project going forward.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. This Committee acknowledges the motions that have been passed by both Councils and that the Bideford to Barnstaple rail link is considered as part of the People and Place project.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To ensure the Councils are aware of the motions that have been passed and that they are embedded in the work programme for this project going forward.

4. REPORT

4.1. Both North Devon Council and Torrige District Council have received a presentation from Tim Steer, Director of Bideford Railway Heritage centre and ACE Rail lead regarding the proposed re-instatement of a Bideford to Barnstaple rail link for passenger and other services.

4.2. Torrige District Council received a presentation at Full Council. Councillor Christie provided a written notice of motion at the subsequent Full Council committee on the 13th June 2022 as follows:

- *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.*

4.3. Councillor Mckenzie suggested an amendment that the extension of the railway line from Barnstaple to Bideford also be embedded in the Economic Development Business Plan.

4.4. This motion was carried by Torrige District Council. It is therefore important that this Joint Planning Policy Committee are aware of the motion and that the aspiration to extend the railway line from Barnstaple to Bideford is explored through this People and Place project.

4.5. North Devon Council received a presentation at Strategy and Resources committee on the 4th April 2022. Councillor Lofthouse had previously presented a motion to Full Council on the 23rd February 2022, which was referred to the same Strategy and Resources Committee (on the 4th April 2022). The motion stated:

“Motion to support the re-instatement of Bideford to Barnstaple rail link for passenger and other services, as proposed by ACE Rail. This Council agrees to:

- 1) Include this policy aim within the revised joint local plan.*
- 2) Work with partners and organisations to support and develop this idea and to lobby those who may contribute to making this happen including Great British Railways, Devon County Council, Peninsula Transport, and the Government.*
- 3) Invite Councillor Tim Steer to a future Full Council meeting to give a presentation of what is currently being proposed by ACE Rail.”*

4.6. Following consideration of the presentation and the motion, North Devon Council resolved:

That motion to support the re-instatement of Bideford to Barnstaple rail link for passenger and other services, as proposed by ACE Rail be supported and the Council agrees:



- (a) That the inclusion of this policy aim within the revised joint local plan be referred to the Joint Planning Policy Committee for consideration;*
- (b) To work with partners and organisations to explore this idea and where necessary to lobby those who may contribute to making this happen including Great British Railways, Devon County Council, Peninsula Transport, and the Government.*

4.7. This report highlights this motion to the Joint Planning Policy Committee and the need to consider the inclusion of this rail link within the revised joint local plan.

4.8. This report is highlighting the resolutions of both Councils on this matter and recommends that the Joint Committee acknowledge them and require officers to ensure that the consideration of including this link in the revised Local Plan is explored and embedded within the work programme for this project.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Any costs resulting from including this item within the People and Place project can be met within existing budgets and will be shared across the Councils.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. An equalities assessment will be carried out for this project, of which this matter is a part.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. The environmental impacts of including this within the revised Local Plan will form a critical part of the work.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. The North Devon Council and Torrige District Council Corporate Priorities have been considered in the drafting of the report.



9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Schedule 2, paragraph 1.1.1-1.1.3 of the North Devon Council and Torrige District Council Joint Planning Policy Agreement.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- NDC Strategy and Resources Committee – 4th April 2022 – minutes
- TDC Full Council – 11th April 2022 - minutes
- TDC Full Council – 13th June 2022 - minutes

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

12.1 The author confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

- Cllr P. Watson (TDC) Lead member for Planning and Development;
- Cllr M Prowse (NDC) Lead Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning Policy;
- Helen Smith (TDC) Planning Manager
- Nina Lake (NDC) Head of Programme Management and Performance