

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

Reasons in summary: Choice Capacity Congestion Carbon Connectivity Economy

1. To provide an additional choice of transport between the two major towns of North Devon and the county's capital city, and in particular to help reduce road vehicle commuter traffic.
2. To provide additional transport capacity for a growing, thriving area.
3. To help alleviate current and future traffic congestion eg currently particularly at rush hour at the Cedar's roundabout and the Sticklepath Hill area.
4. To help reduce carbon and other greenhouse gases and road traffic pollutants by using sustainably-powered trains to contribute to meeting Devon's Carbon Net Zero target.
5. To connect Torrington and the coastal strip - including Bickington, Fremington, Yelland and Instow - with the wider country via the Tarka line connection with Exeter, supporting modal shift by offering competitive journey times.
6. To bring more economic opportunities and prosperity to residents and businesses who will be connected with the line and to the wider area.
7. To open up easier access for tourists to visit the area, boosting the local economy.

The proposals for the line will safeguard the current active travel Tarka Trail and also help make it more sustainable with the anticipated rise in sea levels which could see parts of the trail under water in the future.

There are a number of individuals and organisations already looking to support the re-instatement of the Bideford to Barnstaple train line:

Cllr Tim Steer - Director of Bideford Railway Heritage Centre and ACE Rail lead

Cllr Andrea Davis - Transport lead DCC, Peninsula Transport Chair, Tarka Rail Association President

Cllr Linda Hellyer - Bideford East Division Devon County Council

Mike Day - Tarka Rail Association Chair

Bideford Town Council

Two key rail industry representatives have been briefed and given supportive advice:

Christian Irwin - Industry Programme Director for Network Rail South West

Matt Barnes - Head of Strategic Planning for GWR, formerly Regional Development Manager

This Council agrees to

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