



Motion to Bideford Town Council, Thursday 7th December 2023 – agreed

Project Description:

Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance

Bideford Town Council recognises the importance of multiple transport links to the rest of the country and aims to see Bideford reconnected to the national rail network for the benefit of the local economy and community as soon as practically possible.

This Council therefore RESOLVES:

- 1) To join the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance as a founding member;
- 2) To call on other public bodies, voluntary and business stakeholders and others to take an active role in the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance;
- 3) Support ACE Rail 'Reconnection 2040 Agenda' to see Bideford fully reconnected to the national rail network by 2040;
- 4) Urge both Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and Torridge District Council Local Plan Committee to reflect this desire in any plans they bring forward for public consultation;
- 5) To urge the Torridge Levelling Up Partnership to use the funding made available to it by government to advance the cause of reinstating the railway line from Barnstaple to Bideford;
- 6) To host the inaugural meeting of the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance by 31st March 2024 and work with its other members to promote the reconnection of Bideford to the national rail network.

Benefits:

The benefit to Bideford and its neighbouring towns of the railway network once again coming as far as Bideford is so significant as to warrant the efforts of taking a leading role in the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance. While our contribution in terms of officer time will be minimal our continuing to champion the desire for Bideford to be reconnected is the only way higher level authorities will undertake the necessary works to achieve this ambition.

The benefit to Bideford is longer term in both environmental, economic and social impacts of reinstating the railway line. However, in joining the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance as a founding member we get the most influence in shaping any ideas and options being explored that may no longer be possible once larger authorities and government departments have fully taken the project on for completion.

We give the residents of Bideford the most influence and power in achieving the 'Reconnection 2040 Agenda' by being a founding member and driving forward what is essential to keep Bideford relevant in a rapidly changing future.