

**please reply to:**

'Benslee'

Morchard Road

Crediton

Devon

EX17 5LR

FREEPOST D & T Devolution

[devontorbaydeal@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:devontorbaydeal@torbay.gov.uk)

[alan.clark@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:alan.clark@railfuture.org.uk)

2024-03-24

Dear Devon and Torbay Councils,

## **Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal**

Railfuture welcomes this public consultation on the Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal.

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, independent national voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities.

We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

1. How are you responding to this consultation?

I am responding on behalf of, or as a representative of, a business or organisation.

2. Please tell us the name of the business or organisation.

Railfuture – Devon & Cornwall regional branch

3. What is the first part of your postcode (eg TQ1)?

EX17

4. Which local authority area do you live in?

Mid-Devon

5. Which local authority area do you work in?

I don't currently work

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to maximise our economic potential through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

Strongly agree

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to address our housing pressures through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

Strongly agree

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to improve local transport through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

Strongly agree

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) [www.railfuturescotland.org.uk](http://www.railfuturescotland.org.uk) [www.railfuturewales.org.uk](http://www.railfuturewales.org.uk)  
[www.railwatch.org.uk](http://www.railwatch.org.uk)

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to meet our net zero ambitions through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

Strongly agree

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to deliver investment in Devon and Torbay through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

Strongly agree

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that it will support industries that are important to Devon and Torbay?

Strongly agree

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed delivery arrangements for the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

Strongly agree

13. If you have any comments you would like to make about the proposals for the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, please tell us using the space below.

# From the Policy Paper from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities dated 25th January 2024:

+ we welcome the 5<sup>th</sup> point in the Summary of the devolution deal: *“New powers to improve and better integrate local transport, including the ability to introduce bus franchising subject to approval from the Secretary of State for transport, and control of appropriate local transport functions e.g. responsibility for an area-wide local transport plan.”*

+ we take particular note of these sections in the Policy Paper: *“Transport - Powers of the local transport authority and local transport plans (paras. 80-83) and Local and regional partnership working (paras. 84-85) and also Active Travel (para. 92).*

# From the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority – Draft Proposal:

+ we note the Background and context to Transport and Infrastructure and observe that while there are two strategic rail routes connecting the area with the rest of the UK, for inter-regional connectivity, the importance of intra-regional connectivity must not be over-looked;  
+ we share the stated Ambitions for the people who live and work in Devon and Torbay to be better connected, more competitive, and more prosperous, and to create more learning opportunities, construct new homes, foster local business growth, and improve our public transportation system and roads.

+ we especially welcome this – “Our Priorities - 3. Improving Local Transport:

~ *As the Local Transport Authority, the CCA will develop an area-wide Local Transport Plan. The Department for Transport will use this Plan as a basis for future local transport investment.*

~ *The CCA will design and deliver a pipeline of transport interventions which align with Devon and Torbay’s wider priorities including local growth, improving transport user experience, decarbonisation and reducing environmental impact.”*

# While we support the devolution deal, we also think that it will be important for the Devon & Torbay CCA to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. We note that the new CCA comes within the area covered by the sub-national transport body Peninsula Transport, and that could be one forum for the co-operative approach which we advocate. By way of an example, the physical works for the proposed re-opening of the railway for passenger services to and from Tavistock would be wholly within the Devon & Torbay CCA area, but train services would run to and from Plymouth and, as the business case suggests, the best overall outcome including best achievement of scheme objectives would arise where there are also improvements to the local stations on the route within Plymouth.



# As a founder member of the new Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance, with other stakeholder partners Railfuture is supporting the Alliance in developing the business case to achieve this goal: *“To secure a new rail link between Bideford and Barnstaple and upgrade of the North Devon (Tarka) Line between Exeter and Barnstaple, championing their transformational benefits for communities and businesses and advocating to decision-makers the economic, social and environmental case for developing and investing in the project.”* We see the new Local Transport Authority as a strategic opportunity to pioneer new working relationships and successful collaborations with the CCA in pursuit of that goal.

14. Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity:

Not applicable for an organisation.

15. Which of the following age groups applies to you?

Not applicable for an organisation.

16. Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?

Not applicable for an organisation.

17. If you would like a copy of the consultation report, please leave your email address below:

[alan.clark@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:alan.clark@railfuture.org.uk)

Yours faithfully,

Alan Clark  
Railfuture  
Secretary, Devon & Cornwall regional branch