

Bideford Town Council meeting 10th July 2025, Agenda item 14:

To receive an update from the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance - Tim Steer

Tim Steer, Railfuture's newly-elected Devon and Cornwall regional branch chair

All the campaign work that I was leading under ACE Rail has now been absorbed by the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance.

Two SOBCs (Strategic Outline Business Cases)

1. To upgrade the existing North Devon (Tarka) line for resilience, improved journey time, an extra service frequency per hour and for capacity.
2. Only once the North Devon line has been upgraded, extend the line to service the new-to-rail market of greater Bideford.

The funding for SOBC-2 has come from Bideford TC, Railfuture, Torridge DC and Barnstaple TC. We are still short by £2,000 to complete all the work and hope this council can help support this need.

What have we achieved? The Devon County Council LTP4 has included the modernisation of the North Devon line and the Bideford extension. The [Devon & Torbay Combined County Authority Board](#) are due to adopt the final Devon & Torbay Local Transport Plan 4, 2025-40, and Local Growth Plan, on the 28th July.

Peninsula Transport which is the shadow sub-national transport body for our region has placed both the Modernisation of the North Devon line and the Bideford extension in their Strategic Implementation Plan for 2025-50.

Barnstaple TC has offered to hold next March's annual Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance meeting in their historic Guildhall.

A Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance workshop has been planned at the Burton art gallery for 3rd September. This is invitation-only, and Bideford TC as a founder member of the Alliance has received invitations for an officer and members with certain remits.

Under the new government's criteria Railfuture is working on the SOBC with consultants to deliver two value-for-money sustainable transport schemes that follow the Treasury's Green Book guidance. The Treasury states that there will now be a clamp down on benefit-to-cost ratios that fail schemes, though Bideford already scores highly.

Railfuture follows the official DfT Business Case guidance on making campaigns into schemes by going through formal SOBC, funded, work using independent rail consultants. After the SOBC, we will then work on an Outline Business Case before a Full Business Case that can then be delivered to national government. This follows the formal Department for Transport guidance before any scheme can become a transport project to service our communities.