



Gary Taylor

11 hrs

As Portfolio Holder (PH) for Planning, I am very pleased to advise that Teignbridge District Council has been successful in gaining sponsorship from MP Anne Marie Morris in our bid to support the Heath Rail Link (HRL) through the Government's 'Restoring Your Railway' Ideas Fund, which closed for submissions yesterday.

While there will have been many local authorities wishing to promote such schemes on behalf of local supporters and other interest groups, it is very much hoped that Teignbridge District Council's bid will be successful.

Council leader, Gordon Hook, together with fellow Newton Abbot District Councillors Rob Hayes (who will be well known to HRL members) and Jackie Hook (PH for Climate Change and Coastal Protection) have worked hard to get a well considered and competitive bid prepared in the very short time frame available (see further details below).

Here's hoping now that the Department for Transport agree with us that the bid for the restoration of the Newton Abbot to Heathfield link is on the right track!

Gary Taylor  
Portfolio Holder for Planning, Teignbridge District Council

**Gary Taylor** Brief description of proposed development work:

To restore to passenger service specification the existing railway link between Newton Abbot station and Heathfield - a recently used 4½ mile section of the Dartmoor branch line that once ran through nearby Bovey Tracey to Moretonhampstead.

**Project Overview:**

The existing railway line between the intercity station at Newton Abbot and Heathfield (Bovey Tracey).

**Train Service:**

A daily passenger shuttle service with the potential also for a park and ride facility, to run between local employment, housing and holiday visitor nodes - using either cascaded or upgraded rolling stock. The possibility also of running historic or steam-hauled specials at busy holiday times, making use of current rail head passing loop to reverse any locomotive used.

**Infrastructure:**

Restore existing infrastructure to ensure track complies with current safety standards. Refurbish and restore existing platforms and re-lay missing or damaged rails. Renew signals and information boards.

**Strategic Case:**

Current transport issues and challenges -

Congestion and excessive vehicle traffic in and around Newton Abbot. Despite the new A380 South Devon link road between Newton Abbot and Torbay, peak-time traffic flows are severely constrained along the east-west A382 corridor by local topography between the A380 at Newton Abbot and the A38 Heathfield / Bovey Tracey junction. Although improvements to the A382 to the west of Newton Abbot are coming forward, with the large number of new housing and employment developments being delivered in this area via the Teignbridge Local Plan (soon to be uplifted from 620 to 760 homes per year) such congestion is expected to increase.

**Target population -**

With new development in Newton Abbot swelling the local population and with the large industrial parks in the Heathfield area providing an increasing number of local job opportunities, a more sustainable and reliable means of transport to and from the busy intercity station hub at Newton Abbot would be very popular.

The 4½ miles distance between stations is beyond the realistic range that could be expected for walking or cycling. However, given GWR's new rail timetable - which has doubled the frequency of services for local stations on the 'Riviera Line' between Exeter and Paignton via Newton Abbot - passenger transport is expected to grow considerably in the years ahead, to the benefit of our train operating companies and of course our environment.

**Local Support / Promoter:**

Teignbridge District Council (Promoter), Newton Abbot Town Council, Heath Rail Link.

**Other useful information to support the Strategic Case:**

The Heathfield line is given policy protection in the Teignbridge Local Plan (2013-2033) in order to retain a sustainable transport corridor between Newton Abbot and Heathfield / Bovey Tracey. This policy position will be carried over into the Local Plan Update (2020-2040) which is on the point of going out to consultation. This Local Plan Update includes the Government's 'Standard Method' for calculating housing need, which would deliver an uplift from 620 to 760 homes per year over this forward period. Our railways have long been seen as one of the most sustainable methods of mass transportation. Consequently, in the wider Exeter area, development has tended to cluster around the location of stations. Teignbridge District Council is one of the four Local Authorities who partner the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) and we are taking forward our strategic plans in unison. These plans not only focus on existing stations but on those that we would expect to be built over the next 20 years.

New stations have come forward (or are soon to do so) in the Exeter City Council area (for instance Newcourt and Marsh Barton) aiding both development and connectivity.

In Teignbridge, we see Heathfield as a strategic area for employment, with nearby Bovey Tracey a potentially sustainable area for further housing growth. A new station between Newton Abbot and Torbay at Edginswell (near Torbay Hospital) is also on the wish list. This would make a very good strategic 'destination' station, with well advanced major development (and of course potential rail customers) also nearby.

**Other useful information (with thanks to Wikipedia and others):**

The last regular passenger trains ran to Heathfield in 1959. In 1970, Heathfield became the terminus of the branch line, with a few freight trains running serving an oil terminal that opened in 1965.

In 2009 the line was mothballed, however in 2011 the line was re-opened to facilitate the transport of timber from Heathfield to North Wales. In the same month a timber siding was opened at Teigngrace. As Teigngrace lacks a passing loop, trains would continue to Heathfield to permit locomotives to run around the wagons using the passing loop in the disused station. Some Christmas special services were also run during this period.

A new company, Heath Rail Link (HRL) met with Network Rail in January 2018 to discuss plans for a park and ride facility at Heathfield. During the meeting, Network Rail gave authorisation for HRL to lease the line given a suitable funding model.

We now very much hope such funding can come forward in the near future via this bid from Teignbridge District Council to the Government Ideas Fund initiative.

Gordon Hook  
Leader, Teignbridge District Council

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