

## **Notes of joint meeting of Bishopsteignton Parish Council working group and Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group on 12 April 2022 at 7pm via Zoom**

### **Present:**

Bishopsteignton Parish Council - Cllrs Kate Benham, Henry Merritt (Chair)

Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group members – Bill Bailey, Rona Boyne, Roger North, Roger North, Ben Northcott (from 7.30pm), Claire Quelvennec, Judith Sharples (note taker)

Devon County Council - Hannah Clark

Teignbridge District Council - Estelle Skinner

### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Roger in his new role as a member of the campaign group, and thanked Hannah and Estelle for their attendance.

### **2. Update**

Hannah provided an update on developments since the last meeting on 18 January 2022 as follows:

- Arron Carpenter has been appointed as the new principal engineer following Roger's retirement;
- negotiations with land owners are continuing and there have been no significant developments since the last meeting;
- delivery of the scheme will require significant external funding which has not yet been secured – national funding is often subject to a competitive bidding process and no obvious funding source has been identified yet;
- Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund was launched on 23 March 2022 but only partial details have been published so far;
- the deadline for bids is 6 July 2022 and projects must be delivered by March 2025 with funding at notable risk of having to be returned if this deadline is not met;
- priority is likely to be given to bids from 'tier 1' areas – Teignbridge is categorised as 'tier 3' (the lowest of 3 priority categories);
- district councils can submit one bid in each MP's constituency area and DCC can submit one separate bid – all bids must be supported by the local MP;
- as landowner agreements are not yet in place with all the landowners for the section of the trail that was the subject of the planning application, DCC is not optimistic that this section of the trail could be delivered by 2025 and does not want to spend time pursuing funding bids that are unlikely to be successful as that could damage its credibility and reduce its chances of securing funding in future;
- it is not known at this stage whether there will be further rounds of bidding for the Levelling Up Fund;

- DCC is funding internal work to progress the TET including the ongoing landowner negotiations and design planning;
- a whole scheme cost estimate is being put together – this will put DCC in a stronger position to bid for funding in future;
- Hannah is aware of an outstanding action from the last meeting to provide details of the economic benefits of the Exe trail – this has taken longer than expected as the report has been archived but she is still working on it.

Members of the group expressed disappointment that a bid for funding from the Levelling Up Fund may not be pursued at present, particularly as cycling infrastructure schemes were specified as one of the schemes that could be funded.

A discussion followed on potential funding opportunities and the following points were clarified:

- Estelle advised that Teignbridge DC has not yet made a decision on whether the TET or another project would form the basis of a bid for Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund but she would notify us when a final decision had been made;
- DCC and Teignbridge DC would work together to ensure that any bids submitted were complementary;
- The deadline for delivering projects is the same as for Round 1 (March 2025) which means projects must now be delivered within a shorter timescale;
- Hannah does not know how long the TET would take to complete once the building work commences but the intention would be to do the work in phases;
- If funding is secured, this may help to accelerate negotiations with land owners;
- DCC's capital funding is limited so it will need to think strategically about how best to use its own funding to maximum effect;
- Hannah and Estelle are still in regular contact with the Sustrans partnership manager but have not yet managed to secure any Sustrans funding;
- An application to the Levelling Up Fund could potentially be made for sections of the TET that are 'shovel ready' (e.g. the section from Dawlish to Holcombe) but was unlikely to be successful as the impact would be lower than it would be if the whole scheme was delivered and two previous bids for government funding for this section had been unsuccessful;
- DCC is still in negotiation with Network Rail on their plans for making the railway between Teignmouth and Holcombe more resilient and does not want to seek funding for the original inland route between Teignmouth and Holcombe until there is greater certainty on Network Rail's plans;
- The support of the parish council and campaign group and evidence of widespread public support for the TET will be very useful in any future funding applications.

### **3. Other matters**

Estelle advised that Teignbridge DC will shortly be carrying out a consultation on proposals for Queen St which will be funded using the Future High Streets funding.

Judith asked Hannah whether the analysis referred to in the planning application documents showing that Teignmouth was one of the most economically vulnerable parts of Devon following the Covid pandemic could be shared. Hannah agreed to look into this.

### **4. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm. Following consultation with the group, it was agreed to continue to meet via Zoom.