

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Because of the scale and complexity of the proposals an E I A has been necessary. This is a rigorous formal assessment which sits alongside the planning applications as further information. It supports what they contain and assists the Local Planning Authorities (Exmoor National Park and North Devon Council) and various consultees (such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage) in their evaluation of the applications.

The EIA is required by European Law and undertaken in accordance with detailed guidance.

There are seven main areas covered by the EIA:

- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Geology
- Traffic and Transportation
- Socio-Economic Impacts
- Ecology
- Noise & Vibration
- Heritage

A team of specialists has undertaken surveys and assessed impacts in detail under each of these headings. For Landscape and Visual Impact we have identified key viewpoints and worked out what the Railway and engine shed will look like in the landscape – in photomontages – also on display.

For Ecology we have undertaken a general survey for all ecological issues and then specific surveys for dormice, bats, otters, grassland, and invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed. The overall impacts of the Railway on wildlife – positive and negative – will be reported.

For Hydrology we have assessed the impact of the proposals on all of the watercourses the reinstated track will cross. We have also undertaken Flood Risk Assessments for the replacement embankment at Parracombe Bank and for all of the new development at Blackmoor Gate.

For Transport we have assessed the impact of the proposals in use and in construction on the local road network.

For Heritage the main features effected are St Petrock's Church at Churchtown, Parracombe and Holwell Castle. The heritage of the Railway itself is also important – the Railway existed before the National Park was designated and in restoring it we need to make sure that we capture as much of what was there before as possible.

The impact of the proposals on the local economy and local communities also has to be assessed – there is separate information on these issues on display.

A significant part of the EIA concerns what impacts will arise in building the Railway. We have already prepared a detailed statement dealing with how the Railway will be phased and built – site by site, to allow this to be properly considered.