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Tel : Bideford (01237) 428700

Date: 10 June 2024  
Quorum: 6

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## MEETING OF INTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### SUPPLEMENT

#### PART I - (OPEN SESSION)

8.	<b>QBR 4</b> (Pages 2 - 6)  To be presented by the Principal Accountant and the Service Improvement Officer.
	Meeting Organiser: Kirsty Brown Dem Services 01237 428768
	<b>Centre for Public Scrutiny – website</b> <a href="http://www.cfps.org.uk/">http://www.cfps.org.uk/</a>

# Agenda Item 8 QBR 4 – to end March. Advance Q&A.

## Budget Monitoring and Narrative

### Questions from Steven Dengate

Reference the headline figure surplus variance for the financial year 2023/24 of £1,371k. Will this be allocated to the reserves fund?

The underspend is proposed to go to reserves, any specific reserve allocations will be discussed at C&R.

*Gwydion Batton, Principal Accountant*

Would it be possible to have cashflow forecasting included for large capital projects going forward in respect of when funds are anticipated vs required spending. Will TDC be required to pay in advance of any large receipts expected?

There are currently only two large capital projects with significant funding:

- Disabled Facilities Grant (approx. £1.3m for 24/25) – Grant received at start of the year (ahead of spend)
- Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre – Quarterly returns to the LUF (including cashflow projections) – Funding is received in advance of spend in line with the cashflow.

So currently TDC is not required to pay in advance of large receipt funding.

*Peter Hudson, Principal Accountant (Deputy s151 Officer)*

### Questions from Ian Harper

Car Parking how many car parking hours were bought this year compared to last year? How much does credit card charges cost?

We don't monitor hours specifically, so it would be a bigger piece of work to calculate the hours.

Transactions should give very similar info, see below:

#### Transactions

	Coins	Card	Phone	Total
23/24	270,807	87,630	310,204	768,641
22/23	340,112	155,417	255,222	750,751
	- 69,305	32,213	54,982	17,890

#### Revenue (incl VAT)

	Coins	Card	Phone	Total
23/24	£510,180	£575,430	£859,061	£ 1,944,670
22/23	£561,332	£448,224	£612,666	£ 1,622,221
	- £51,152	£127,206	£246,395	£322,449

## Card Charges

Ringo (card etc. over mobile) 2.4% of Transaction Fee

Physical Card at Machine £0.15 per Transaction plus £17.50 per month Wireless Data fee per machine

Total fees increased by 17% on last year, mostly due to increased use of Ringo, which is the most cost-efficient method of payment.

Supplier	22/23	23/24
IPS (Cards)	65,529	67,547
Ringo (Mobile)	39,288	55,016
<b>Total</b>	<b>104,817</b>	<b>122,563</b>

*Peter Hudson, Principal Accountant (Deputy s151 Officer)*

### **Harbour significant drop on actual income from last year, what was the overall position regarding costs this year?**

The Harbour and Pilotage services was subject to an overall saving in costs of £9,884 in 2023.24 in comparison with the prior year, of which £6,194 related to salary costs and the remaining balance of £3,689 related to Premises, Transport and supplies and services costs.

2022/23 Costs	£136,325
2023/24 Costs	£126,441
Savings	£9,884

*Sally Piper, Senior Accountant*

### **Active Torridge surplus where did this come from?**

Active Torridge surplus was due to the Management fee payable by Torridge District Council being £147k less than budgeted, due to operating efficiencies.

*Sally Piper, Senior Accountant*

## Budget Narrative

### Question from Steven Dengate

**Encouraging to see the Waverley in Bideford on 31<sup>st</sup> May. Based on the response to the QBR 2 (Q2) to the following question and response given please could we be updated us on the 2024 scenarios are developing and whether this is helping increase the projected harbour income for 2024.**

Waverley is due back for her second call on Wednesday 19th June and the Harbour Master is in dialogue with the ships agents to encourage her to return next year on more occasions.

We are expecting the first trial harvest of seaweed from the offshore farm to be landed at Bideford later this year. This is anticipated to be a cargo stream of up to 10000 tons per annum when the farm reaches maturity over the next 5 years.

Efforts to bring commercial ships back to Bideford continue, but levels of trade in clay and other suitable cargoes are still below pre pandemic levels. This is reflected in ports of similar size to Bideford across the UK.

*Paul Brown, Harbour Master on behalf of Richard Haste.*

# Theme 1 Local Economy

## Question from Steven Dengate

For all areas in red on the QBR4 can we possibly have a brief explanation to the actions planned (if any) to address them going forward. i.e. ED001 *The economy is still challenged by high energy costs, high interest rates and lock of finance available.* CC001 *These are annual figures.*

Economic Development					
Measure	Description	Total Year to Date	Total Same Time Last year	Year to date target	Notes
ED001	Number of people who are <u>not</u> in employment and claiming Universal Credit	Mar 2024 <b>Torridge 3,410</b> Southwest 279,704 UK excl. NI 4,103,855	Jan 2023 <b>Torridge 2,953</b> Southwest 246,245 UK 3,567,248	-	The economy is still challenged by high energy costs, high interest rates and lack of finance available.

Moving people into employment is highly challenging at the moment. High interest rates are creating significant challenges for investment and job creation due to high borrowing costs and anxiety remains high within the private sector. Coupled with uncertainty about when the election would be called that is only going to see the figures drifting gradually in one direction.

The Department for Work and Pensions are active participants in our regional Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group which has directly shaped the forthcoming Economic Strategy, and which has also helped to shape local authority workplans to ensure that our teams' efforts, alongside those of Petroc on a skills-development front, are focused on improving the conditions for long-term skilled job creation.

*Chris Fuller, Economic Development Manager*

Carbon Neutrality					
Measure	Description	Total Year to Date	Total Same Time Last year	Year to date target	Notes
CC001	Gross tCO2e Emissions from TDC operations (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)	<b>8,014.8</b>	4,267		These are annual figures.
CC002	Net tCO2e Emissions from TDC operations (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)	<b>8,011.5</b>	4,267		

The majority of our carbon emissions come from our properties, our fleet transport and from our procured goods and services.

**Property:** we have energy surveys for the majority of our properties and will have heat decarbonisation plans for the biggest energy users shortly. We have recently been awarded over £1M funding to decarbonise Holsworthy Pool. Actions to address energy consumption at other sites will be identified through our Asset Management programme.

**Transport:** we will consider electric alternatives when replacing our fleet transport, where available. Councillors should note there is no suitable replacement for our HGVs at present.

**Procured goods and services:** these emissions will be extremely difficult for the Council to address, as we rely on our suppliers to do so. Our Major Projects team endeavour to use low or lower carbon materials in construction, where possible. Our Social Value Policy, approved January 2024, offers suppliers the opportunity to provide goods or services with lower carbon emissions.

*Donna Sibley, Sustainability and Climate Officer*

Planning					
LE168c	E2E Pre-App's £220 Small Minor Other - Days Valid to Response	60	55	28	Pre-application responses are not subject to statutory targets however the Service Development Plan includes a focus on improving turnaround times – this work is in progress.
LE168d	E2E Pre-App's £500 Minor - Days Valid to Response	84	67	42	
Planning Enforcement					
EF2	High Priority cases visited within 2 working days - %	66%	83%	90%	The Enforcement Plan is being reviewed, which includes consideration of a more realistic timescale for enforcement site visits as the current timescale is unrealistic.
EF3	All other cases visited within 14 working days - %	35%	24%	80%	

**Pre-app (LE168c & LE168d)** – to expand on the existing comment, this is a focus area for improvement within the Service Business Plan. We do not have statutory targets however recognise that with the expected change in Government targets around determination of applications and the removal of extensions of time, this must be a focus area for improvement alongside encouraging more applicants and agents to front load their proposal with consideration through our pre-application process.

**Enforcement (ENF2 & ENF3)** – to expand on the existing comment around the review of the Enforcement Plan and to highlight that only a small number of high priority cases are received so failure to attend a single site within the target timescale can result in skewed figures.

*Helen Smith, Planning Manager*

### Question from Ian Harper

**ED001 /002 In comparison to SW and National figures are we worse off in percentage terms of the working population?**

Measure	Description	Total Year to Date	Total Same Time Last year
ED001	Number of people who are <u>not</u> in employment and claiming Universal Credit	Mar 2024 <b>Torridge</b> 3,410 Southwest 279,704 UK excl. NI 4,103,855	Jan 2023 <b>Torridge</b> 2,953 Southwest 246,245 UK 3,567,248
ED002	Number of people who <u>are in</u> employment and claiming Universal Credit	Mar 2024 <b>Torridge</b> 2,329 Southwest 198,229 UK excl. NI 2,491,649	Jan 2023 <b>Torridge</b> 2,083 Southwest 175,641 UK excl. NI 2,228,733

	Torridge	South West	England	UK
Percentage of population aged 16 - 64 on universal credit.	15.1%	13.6%	15.9%	14.6%
Source: Nomis				Source: ONS

## Question from Ian Harper

**Inward investment, this has turned amber, yet it is still shown as being on target, is this correct?**

**A number of areas are shown as amber yet shown as being on target, could an explanation be given as to the targets and are they SMART?**

Sorry for any confusion caused – if the actions are not complete, I change the colour to amber so they can be added as an appendix to the new QBR which is aligned to the new Strategic Plan.

*Anna Fay, Service Improvement Officer*