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Tel : Bideford (01237) 428700

Date: 4 November 2024
Quorum: 6

MEETING OF INTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

On:	Tuesday 12 November 2024	At:	10.00 am
Venue:	Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS		

SUPPLEMENT AGENDA

PART I - (OPEN SESSION)

8.	Questions & Answers for QBR 2 (Pages 2 - 7)
	Meeting Organiser: Kirsty Brown Dem Services 01237 428768
	Centre for Public Scrutiny – website http://www.cfps.org.uk/

Agenda Item 8 QBR 2 – to end September. Advance Q&A.

Performance Highlights – page 3

Question from Ian Harper

Theme 1

Was the invitation to local contractors successful and will it be repeated?

The 'Meet the Buyer' event was organised by Torridge District Council in association with BAM, the appointed contractor. The event was well publicised with an advert in the North Devon Gazette (16 November) as well as copy in the editorial on the same day. Coverage also appeared across various local news websites in the lead-up to the event. Awareness was also generated through a number of posts on Torridge's own social media channels, as well as being shared and supported by our neighbouring authority, North Devon Council. To ensure we reached as many potential contractors as possible, leaflets were also distributed to local builders' merchants and supply stores, as well as being displayed in Appledore itself.

On the day, around 25 companies attended the event which was held at St Mary's Church Hall in Appledore. In addition to this, those who were unable to attend were encouraged to email the contractor direct to register their interest. To date we have around 36 companies on the list – which the contractor has said is a very good response due to the size and location of the project.

Whilst there are no immediate plans to repeat the event at this time, we will continue to update the market as new trades / labourers are required.

Rachel Anderson, Communications Lead

Question from Councillor Hames

May I also suggest that in Performance Highlights there is reference to the recently purchased battery-powered street cleaning machine? This could also be reported in the Environment section under Waste.

This item of equipment was not purchased until October 2024, therefore outside the scope of QBR2. This can be added in Q3.

Key Income Streams – page 6

Question from Councillor Pennington

Car Parking

South Hams have introduced a differential charging allowing residents to pay a lower price. Has Torridge ever thought of adopting a similar policy?

We have no plans to have a two-tier system in Torridge. Our charges are based on operating costs, and we invest heavily in our car parks.

We already offer a range of discounted residents permits and have a seasonal charge in Appledore and Westward Ho! It is a balance between offering a discount to residents and encouraging tourists to the area.

Steve Macey, Car Parks Manager

Question from Ian Harper

Harbour and Pilotage

Will Appledore now be developed as the port for Bideford and area?

It was good to see that there will have been four vessels using the facility to November, congratulations to all involved in making this happen.

We have cargo ships wanting to come into the estuary and presently the Harland and Wolff berth in Appledore is the most suitable for them to discharge their cargo. The main reason being the dust arising from the discharge of animal feed which is not really appropriate for a town centre quayside location.

There are no formal plans to develop Appledore and certainly not at the expense of Bideford – our preference would be for both ports to benefit from the renaissance. We have been pushing Sibelco to bring their exports stream of North Devon ball clay back to Bideford and remain hopeful that this will register some results in the coming months.

We will continue to work very hard to attract new shipping business to the Estuary which will benefit the whole area.

Paul Brown, Bideford Harbour Master

Salaries monitoring – page 7

Question from Councillor Pennington

Staff costs

How the changes in employer NIC and minimum wage affect the 2025 budget?

Minimum wage – This will not directly impact Torridge District Council as the lowest scale point is paid above the National Minimum wage level.

Employer NIC – This will have a significant effect on the 2025 budget. Based upon 2024/25 salary costs, the changes in Employer NIC would equate to an additional cost of £274k. The reduction in the threshold representing 66% of this cost with the remainder relating to the increase in rate from 13.8% to 15%.

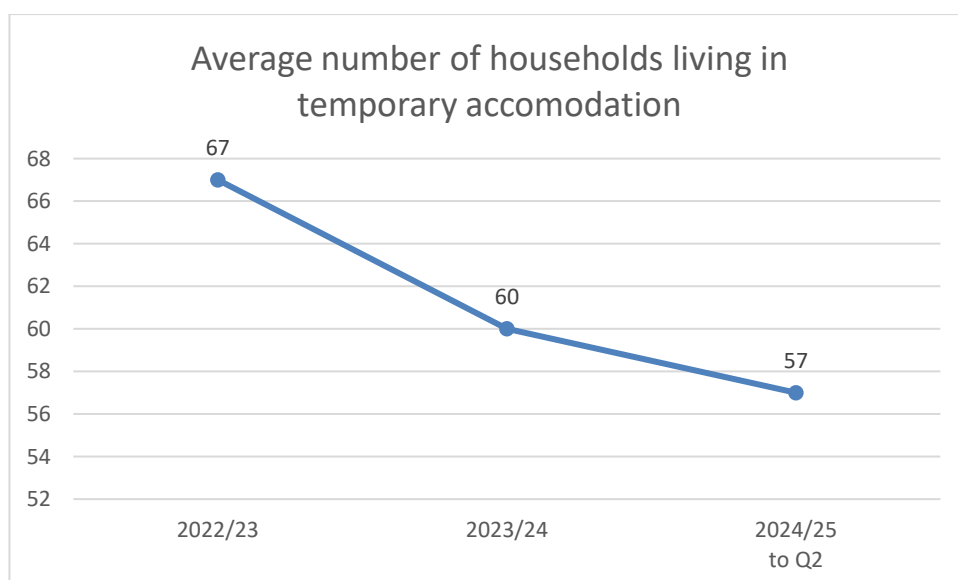
The LGA have asked the government to give clarity on whether councils will be protected from the extra cost pressures from the increases to employer national contributions.

Sally Piper, Senior Accountant

Temporary accommodation – page 8

Question from Councillor Bright

We have a graph on page 8 of temporary accommodation costs, could we have the same graph but for the number of placements over that time? so we can see if it is just the cost that is going down, or the number of cases. Or both.



These are average figures for the year from 2022 when the current monitoring through performance indicators began.

Budget monitoring – page 9

Question from Councillor Pennington

ACMIC.

If the project runs over budget who will fund any shortfall?

Contingency has been built into the budget to mitigate the risk of any unforeseen or extra costs which might arise during the construction process. However, should the project run over budget, the council would need to fund the shortfall.

Sally Piper, Senior Accountant

Capital Narrative - Page 9

Question from Councillor Hames

When will proposals for replacing the refuse vehicles and vans be put before Members this year?

Torrige District Council already have an approved vehicle replacement programme: any updates will be taken to the Full Council during the budget setting process. The budget setting meetings are Community & Resources on the 27th January, Internal Overview & Scrutiny on the 4th February and Full Council on the 24th February.

Sally Piper, Senior Accountant

Investments – page 11

Question from Councillor Hames

Investments: Is it true that the charitable arm of Goldman Sachs Bank donates to support illegal settlers in Hebron?

Investments by Torrige District Council are in line with the approved 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy.

Theme 1

Local Economy

Comment from Councillor Pennington

Pg 26 Economic Development Re Universal Credit claimants

Comment : Disappointing trends when comparing to SW. and UK

Theme 2

Communities, Health and Housing

Question from Ian Harper

Housing Strategy

Recruitment for post of Housing Delivery Lead, has been through two rounds without success, has there been any feedback as to lack of appointment?

We have just gone out to advert again for the same post and the deadline for applications is the 17th of November. We received very few applications during the previous 2 rounds and were only able to shortlist 1 person for interview. The candidate had relevant experience at another local authority however ultimately decided that she did not want to relocate at the present time. We have support in place for any future candidate through an established network of housing enablers and the Homes England Affordable Housing Lead. We have also slightly amended the job description to hopefully open the role up to a wider range of candidates.

Helen Smith, Planning Manager

General Questions

Question from Councillor Bright

Under the 4 themes, I notice there are 24 project updates saying 'ongoing' which makes it very difficult to work out if they are progressing well, or stagnating...






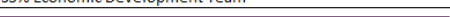
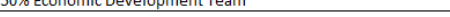

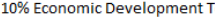


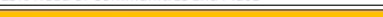
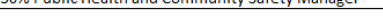
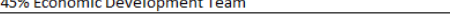









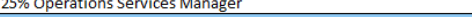
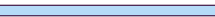
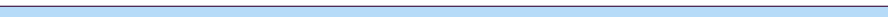
This was similar in the last QBR.

Is there any way of better communicating the progress of these? Maybe for some targets an estimated % of roughly how much progress has been made to achieving the goal?

It is tricky to report progress as a percentage, as the actions reported against the strategic plan are delivered by numerous projects either across one or more than one department.

Progress is reported to the Leadership team using the strategic plan delivery plan document (attached on the next page) which is updated every quarter.

By their nature the actions are “ongoing” until complete but could be reported as “on target” meaning that the action is on target to be completed on time if preferred in the future.

Strategic Plan 2024 - 29	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Theme 1 Local Economy					
Deliver the Appledore Clean Maritime Centre to establish Torridge and wider northern Devon as a global-leading research and development destination for innovation in clean maritime technology.					Start Q1 2024
We will work with Government to co-create and develop a Levelling up Partnership that strives to deliver wide ranging opportunities and benefits to Torridge's residents.					Start Q1 2024
Deliver the Northern Devon Economic Strategy.					Start Q1 2024
Promote the District to attract inward investment being responsive to a changing market.					Start Q1 2024
Lobby and strive for improved infrastructure and public transport.					Start Q1 2024
Accelerate and sustain where possible opportunities for sustainable economic growth within the district's tourism and employment offer.					Start Q1 2024
Encourage business and enterprise through investment and business support.					Start Q1 2024
Investigate with the relevant partner organisations (North Devon Council, DCC, ACE Rail and Network Rail) the appetite to jointly commission and fund a study to evaluate the economic and environmental benefits and impacts of establishing the rail link.					Start Q1 2024
Theme 2 Communities, Health and Housing					
Develop and implement a Housing Strategy that provides creative solutions to meet the housing need of the district.					Start Q1 2024
Utilise Active Torridge to promote and deliver health and wellbeing activities across the project.					Start Q1 2024
Work in partnership to help deliver the OneDevon Five-year Intergrated Care Strategy for Devon.					Start Q1 2024
Deliver the Northern Devon Joint Cultural Strategy.					Start Q1 2024
Work with partners to expand multi-use paths, the footpath network and access to open spaces.					Start Q1 2024
Work with partner agencies to prevent, detect and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.					Start Q1 2024
Theme 3 Our Environment, Our Future					
Relocate all Waste and Recycling resources to one new modern Operational Centre.					Start Q1 2024
Implement, monitor and report on the actions contained in a revised Carbon Plan.					Start Q1 2024
Achieve carbon reduction and energy efficiency across the existing Council asset base.					Start Q1 2024
Deliver the Play Strategy.					Start Q1 2024
Prepare a new Joint Local Plan that aligns to the Councils objectives and strategies.					Start Q1 2024
Adopt a biodiversity plan for TDC open spaces.					Start Q1 2024
Be responsive to erosion risks and work in partnership for the protection of our coastal assets and communities.	N/A				N/A
Work in partnership to deliver the Devon Waste Strategy and align to changes in environmental legislation.					Start Q1 2024
Theme 4 Our Council					
Improve our communications offer to ensure we reach a wider audience.					Start Q1 2024
Produce an understandable and manageable Customer Charter.					Start Q1 2024 Complete Q1 2024
Provide quality services supported by modern, secure and resilient ICT.					Start Q1 2024
Promote the spend, shop and work local values.					Start Q1 2024
Ensure modern, efficient and sustainable procurement practices.					Start Q1 2024
Work with local schools and colleges to increase awareness and involvement in local democracy.					Start Q1 2024
Update our HR and Workforce Plan to enable the Council to adapt to a changing employment market.					Start Q1 2024 Complete Q2 2024