

REPORT OF **Head of Communities and Place**
To: **Overview and Scrutiny (Internal)**
Subject: **Torrige Estuary Strategy**
Date: **20/04/2021**

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

At the last meeting of this committee, the Estuary Strategy was discussed and questions raised about whether it remains current. This report is intended to provide some background to the existing Estuary Strategy in order that members can form a view on whether they should request that Harbour Board consider a review and potential update.

1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2012 Bideford Harbour Board requested the preparation of an Estuary Strategy and Port and Harbour Business Plan in order that they can better manage the Estuary and Port in synchronicity with, and for the overall benefit of, the Council and users. This request was endorsed at C&R committee in Feb 2013 with a budget being approved and permission to proceed received.

The Strategy that was eventually adopted at C&R in August 2014 is attached for member consideration.

2. REPORT

The preparation of the current Strategy and Business Plan, detailed below, required input from multiple professional disciplines.

UK Port Advisers were commissioned to produce the strategy in March 2013 as a lead consultant.

UK Port Advisers work, which integrated all relevant disciplines, covers the creation of a high level strategy for the (relevant parts of the) Taw/Torrige estuary. The strategy incorporates a high level port and harbour business plan for Bideford. It also includes a review of the existing local legislation under which TDC acts as statutory and competent harbour authority and the extent that changes may be needed in order to facilitate TDC's future management of the port and estuary.

1. The content of the high level strategy addressed:

- land allocation and use;
- any needs identified in the port and harbour business plan;
- the Taw and Torrige estuary and coastal management strategy;
- key stakeholder views;
- environmental stewardship and duties;
- relevant economic considerations; and
- applicable policy, law and regulation.



3. Similarly, the content of the high level port and harbour business plan dealt with:

- the future viability of the port;
- its current organisation and management;
- a brief overview of the market;
- an overview of the port's operational capability and needs;
- a review of optimal future geographic locations and land use;
- financial performance to date;
- the port's brand and market position;
- relevant business risks; and
- the governance and management framework.

4. Although the Strategy is high level, the outputs included specific, practical actions capable of implementation.

Public consultation on a draft Strategy was organised by TDC as an aside to the proposed commission. Public consultation closed on the 18th May 2014, there were 16 respondents.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

The Strategy was completed following extensive investigations into the legal aspects of the Councils work and responsibility toward the port, harbour and estuary. These remain the same as in 2014.

Financial Implications

Any review of the strategy will create cost that is not budgeted for. The preparation of the current strategy cost £30,000 + £5,000 expenses in 2014.

Human Resources Implications

If a review of the strategy is prioritised workload priorities within the Harbour and Econ Dev teams will need to be amended giving the potential for delay to other work.

Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

The Strategy was compiled in full consideration of the sustainability and biodiversity implications of it's content.

Equality/Diversity

The Strategy was compiled with due regard to the Council's responsibility to promote equality and diversity.

Risk Management

There is a risk that if the current strategy is no longer relevant or is outdated that the business of the Council/ Port will be affected negatively and that other the other aspects of the strategy will not assist the Council in delivering the services to the community that are required.

Compliance with Policies and Strategies



The strategy was compiled in accordance with all Council policy and strategy at that time.

Ward Member and Leader Member Views

4. CONCLUSIONS

While the Harbour Board only has jurisdiction over matter pertaining to Bideford Harbour it was considered that they were the best placed working group to steer the evolution of a strategy which has a wider geographical remit than that of Bideford Harbour.

External to the Council (although the Council is represented upon it) the Taw and Torridge Estuary Forum is an informal partnership that has multi agency representation and is a consultative body for all Estuary related issues.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

That members consider the Torridge Estuary Strategy and whether they should refer it back to Harbour Board with a recommendation for that working group to consider the need for a review.

If Harbour Board consider that a review is necessary then this will need to be planned for and any financial resource requirement requested from Community and Resources Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations	Chief Executive Head of Legal and Governance S151 Officer
	Date: 12/04/21
Contact Officer:	Head of Communities and Place
Background Papers:	Estuary Strategy

