

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILINTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Virtual Meeting via Zoom with Public Access via YouTube
<https://tinyurl.com/TorridgeYouTube>

Tuesday, 20 April 2021 - 10.00 am

PRESENT Councillor P Watson (Chair)
 Councillor P Hames (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Boughton, J Gubb, S Langford, J Manley, T Inch
 and S Newton

Mr S Dengate and Mr I Harper

ALSO PRESENT S Hearse - Chief Executive
 S Dorey - Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring
 Officer)
 S Kearney - Head of Communities & Place
 D Heyes - Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer)
 J Walter - Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager
 R Haste - Operational Services Manager
 K Brown - Democratic Services Officer

Councillors C Hawkins, C Hodson, K James, N Laws, P
 Pennington

79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Cottle-Hunkin.

80. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Manley and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

A recorded vote was taken.

COMMITTEE MEMBER	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllr Boughton, R	X		
Cllr Cottle-Hunkin, G			
Mr S Dengate	X		
Cllr Gubb, J	X		

Cllr Hames, P	X		
Mr I Harper	X		
Cllr Inch, A	X		
Cllr Langford, S	X		
Cllr Manley, J	X		
Cllr Newton, S	X		
Cllr Watson, P	X		

(Vote: Unanimous)

81. ACTION LIST

Minute 69 – Ongoing

Minute 59 – Ongoing

Minute 61 – Ongoing

Minute 74 – Item on Agenda to be presented at this meeting – action now complete.

Minute 76 – Received cost of Zoom meeting - action now complete.

82. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

83. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

84. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

No urgent matters were brought forward.

85. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

86. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Committee entered straight into a discussion regarding this report, the purpose of which was to update Members on the Grounds Maintenance Contract (GMC) and the draft project plan for bringing the service in-house on 1st April 2022.

Following concern from Councillor Hames that the report did not detail any sustainability and biodiversity implications, the Head of Communities & Place advised this was not necessary for inclusion in this report however it could be

included in future updates and moving forward with the project the Councillor Climate Change Working Group will be involved. The Chief Executive added that on page 18 of the report indicates that the Public Health & Housing Manager will be consulted regarding the Green Agenda.

The Operational Services Manager advised that a better understanding of the estate requirements will be examined during the timeline of this project. Following a query from Councillor Langford he advised he would ascertain who manages the grass cutting of Bowden Green Park and come back with an answer within the week.

The Head of Communities & Place advised following Mr Harper's enquiry that it is not known when the capital repayment is due but would find out and that TDC are not looking to make a business out of bringing the service in house.

The project is in the early stages with this report mainly covering governance, further research will be carried out with a detailed proposal being presented to the Property & Major Projects Working Group first.

The Chief Executive confirmed that once the details are fully specified then this committee will be involved in the budgetary process with the final decision being made at Community & Resources, until then update reports will be presented.

Following a query from Councillor Pennington, the Chief Executive confirmed that the decision to take the service back in house was made at Full Council. The Lead Member roles were reviewed and the re-structure approved at Full Council as well.

It was confirmed that the report be noted with periodic reports being brought back to this committee.

87. QBR REVIEW - TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE T&F GROUP (MOVED FROM MARCH 2021)

The purpose of this item was for Members to receive the report from the Task & Finish Group on the review of the QBR.

The Task & Finish group comprised of the Chair of Internal Overview & Scrutiny, Councillor Newton, Councillor Langford, Mr Dengate, Councillor Hames, the Finance Manager (S151 Officer), the Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager and the Service Improvement Officer.

Councillor Newton opened the presentation expressing firstly how much the group enjoyed being part of this project. Issues with the old QBR were explained with the new design having two main elements, structure and content, resulting in the document being easier to read, understand and have a strong link with the new Strategic Plan. Recommended changes from the Task & Finish group were shown.

The Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager re-iterated Councillor Newton's comments adding information regarding themes and providing examples of old and new layouts for budget monitoring pages.

The presentation continued with detailed description from the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) on the new budget monitoring pages.

Changes to the layout of the actions and performance measures were presented by the Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager showing how the new layout will be amended to flow better and be easier to read. To allow for improvement the Task & Finish group suggested that some historic data, that is included on every QBR, be removed and that a trend analysis be produced on a yearly basis.

The Service Improvement Manager presented the proposal for Trend Analysis which would include:

- Published alongside QBR4 each year
- Additional performance measures to those in QBR1, 2, and 3
- Reads left to right in date order
- Minimum 6 years of data
- Target against current year actual
- Trend graphs

The Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager provided a summary of findings from the group and stressed the importance of aligning the QBR with the Strategic Plan.

Recommended changes include:

Changes to Finance pages

- Remove previous years comparison columns from Income page – these are a distraction
- Include previous years comparison in end of year addendum (see above)
- Move notes on income to relevant row – easier to read/understand
- Change 'total' to 'actual' in column headings
- Add a Forecast column – so we can see what the end of year position will be
- Check the income we are reporting and add anything missing (i.e. green waste & hostel)
- Change headings in salaries monitoring: 'expenditure to date' and 'budget to date' and replace 'same time last year' with 'total budget for current year' and add columns for 'funded establishment' and 'vacancies (excluding /refuse)'
- Re-order the variances with the largest at the top and add a percentage column
- Provide more detail for the Earmarked Revenue Reserve
- Provide more detail on the £17m list and highlight ethical investments
- Reword to short term deposits
- Remove brackets and make clear 'overspend' or 'underspend'
- Add narrative of key detail for earmarked reserves
- Investments – add trades, dates and ethical
- Swap columns – year to date and same time last year

Changes to Highlights

- Take out the Budget monitoring highlights. This is no longer needed as we are including additional narrative in the key areas of the budget monitoring pages.
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Changes to Measures

- Take out the unemployment rate (this is a government model and does not reflect changes in a timely manner). This measure should be replaced by two new measures: 'the number of people who are not in employment and claiming Universal Credit' and 'the number of people who are in employment and claiming Universal Credit'
- The unemployment rate should be included in the annual summary of trends
- Include measure for the timely payment of invoices
- The number of businesses in Torridge should be included in the annual summary of trends
- Take out LE352 (accidents reported on Council premises)
- Add in a new measure to report on achieving carbon neutrality
- Take out BV082a (dry recycling rate) and BV082b (composting)
- Add in two new waste measures: Food Waste Tonnage and Garden Waste Tonnage
- Move the main Land Charges Measure (LE701 – end to end time for searches) from Theme 4 (Our Council) to Theme 1 (Local Economy) and change headings from 'total' to 'average'

Comments were received on how greatly improved the new design is with thanks and congratulations being expressed to all involved.

Following comment from the Chief Executive to add Lead Members to the appropriate Officer name to demonstrate the good working relationship, Councillor Newton suggested initials be added to use less space.

The Chair explained, following a query from Councillor Hodson, the reasoning behind removing businesses from every quarter and adding to the yearly analysis.

It was proposed by Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Manley and –

Resolved:

That the newly designed QBR (Appendix A) format and the Trend Analysis Quarter 4 addendum (Appendix B) for use from 2021/22 onwards be adopted.

A recorded vote was taken.

COMMITTEE MEMBER	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllr Boughton, R	X		
Cllr Cottle-Hunkin, C			
Mr S Dengate	X		
Cllr Gubb, J	X		
Cllr Hames, P	X		

Mr I Harper	X		
Cllr Inch, A	X		
Cllr Langford, S	X		
Cllr Manley, J	X		
Cllr Newton, S	X		
Cllr Watson, P	X		

(Vote: Unanimous)

88. ESTUARY STRATEGY

The Head of Communities & Place presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide 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.

Following the brief debate, a decision was made that a task and finish group be set up to explore the Estuary Strategy before referring the document back to the Harbour Board. The group will consist of Councillor Watson, Councillor Hames, Mr Dengate and Mr Harper with the suggestion that the Chair of the Harbour Board, Councillor Hicks also be on the group. The Chair of Internal Overview & Scrutiny or the Head of Communities & Place will contact Councillor Hicks.

Following suggestion from Councillor Hodson that as the Estuary Strategy is a joint document with North Devon they be involved? The Chair confirmed initially this project be for TDC and if the need arises North Devon could be involved later in the process. The Head of Communities & Pace advised that this document was not adopted by North Devon and they only assisted in the consultation as they have no Harbour Committee.

89. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Chief Executive advised that historically the forward plan is discussed in a meeting at the beginning of the year.

It was confirmed by the Chair that at the meeting on 1st June the forward plan would be discussed in detail which gives committee Member's time to consider items to be included.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.35 am

Chair:

Date: