

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Greenhouse - Riverbank House

Tuesday, 22 July 2025 - 6.00 pm

PRESENT Councillor C Hodson (Chair)  
Councillor S Harding (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors C Bright, S Gibson, S Inch, T Johns and W Lo-Vel  
Non-Elected Members: Mr S Dengate and Mr I Harper

ALSO PRESENT S Hearse - Chief Executive  
S Dorey - Head of Legal & Governance (& Monitoring Officer)  
P Hudson - Finance Manager (S151 Officer)  
A Fay - Service Improvement Officer  
G Batten - Principal Accountant (Deputy S151 Officer)  
K Brown - Democratic Services Officer  
L Glover - Corporate Services Officer  
Councillor K James

401. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Bushby and Councillor D Smith.

402. MINUTES

Members were directed to Page 8 of the agenda pack. The Chair informed the Committee that the Blue Badge Car Parking recommendation would be reviewed at the Member Budget Working Group on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July.

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor S Gibson and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For – 8, Against – 0, Abstentions - 1)

403. ACTION LIST

The Committee discussed and updated the Action List.

404. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

405. 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.

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

Briefly, the Chair addressed the issue of Stagecoach's increased bus fares.

Members mentioned the impact on the community, particularly on students. The Committee noted that the Chair has contacted Stagecoach regarding this matter, and will also discuss with the Chair of the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

407. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

408. QBR 4

The Service Improvement Officer and the Principal Accountant (Deputy S151 Officer) presented the item, the purpose of which was to update Members on the Quarterly Business Report 4 and the Trend Analysis.

The presentation included information on:

- The Performance Management Cycle
- Statistically similar Councils - Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- Theme 1 – Local Economy highlights and Benchmarking
- Theme 2 – Communities, Health & Housing highlights
- Theme 3 – Our Environment Our Future highlights
- Theme 4 – Our Council highlights
- Budget Monitoring: Adverse and Favourable Variances
- Budget Narrative: Key Significant Adverse and Favourable Variances
- Key Income Streams
- Salaries Monitoring (Variance to Budget)
- Temporary Accommodation
- Budget Monitoring: Capital and Capital Narrative
- Budget Monitoring: Earmarked Reserves
- Investments
- Trend Analysis

The Committee were directed to the Supplementary Agenda Pack containing the QBR4 question and answer document.

A discussion occurred. Where appropriate, Members were provided the opportunity to ask additional questions to their questions in the supplement document.

Mr Harper asked for further information on the responsibility related to capital projects. The Chief Executive explained that the Council has grant funding arrangements with external partners to deliver projects. If difficulties in project delivery arise, they are reported to the Council via North Devon Plus, who monitor project progress on behalf of the Council. Internally, Torridge is the accountable body. Therefore, the Senior Leadership Team and the Torridge Place Board have oversight of this process and any changes must be made in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Briefly, concerns were raised regarding the Great Torrington Community Website.

The discussion moved onto the Key Performance Indicators for Active Torridge. The Committee noted that the KPI reporting will be presented to the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members suggested that on Page 20 of the QBR4, the Active Torridge section required more clarity on the KPIs.

With regard to a QBR4 question, the Chair highlighted that the Food Safety Service Plan will be available in the coming weeks, and the Planning Enforcement Plan will be presented to the Committee in September.

A discussion occurred on the waste produced by holiday homes. In relation to recycling, concerns were raised regarding the brown bag system that is currently in place. The Chair informed Members that this question would be referred back to the Operational Services Manager.

The Committee referred to the Performance Trend Analysis of Planning Enforcement, and Members suggested that data presentation could be amended to increase clarity. The Chair informed Members that a discussion would occur with the Planning Manager regarding this matter.

The discussion moved back to the KPIs for Active Torridge. Concerns were raised and the Chief Executive reiterated that KPIs would be presented to the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Legal and Governance (& Monitoring Officer) informed Members that Active Torridge are not contractually obliged to provide KPIs to the Council. When the contract expires, the Council will aim to incorporate KPIs into it.

Members were notified that specific information could be requested from Active Torridge. The Chief Executive outlined the delay in Active Torridge's transition to a new management information system, and declared an interest due to being a director of the Active Torridge Board. The Chair suggested that Active Torridge be invited to the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting when the KPI report is presented.

Members raised queries regarding the increase in employee accidents. The Head of Legal and Governance (& Monitoring Officer) explained that a new online

reporting process has been implemented which has raised awareness. As a result, more incidents have been reported.

In response to a question regarding harbour charges, the Principal Accountant (Deputy S151 Officer) outlined that charges are put under the premise of the 'rent of land'.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive explained that Councils cannot be entered into administration. The Finance Manager (S151 Officer) outlined that investments with other Councils are short-term which provides security. Members noted that the Council bids for competitive rates on these investments.

The Finance Manager (S151 Officer) explained the Counterparty policy. The Chief Executive explained that this policy is reported to Full Council each year.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their contributions.

#### 409. TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT - REVIEW OF PID PROCESS

The Chair presented the item, the purpose of which was to receive the report from the Task & Finish Group regarding the review of the Project Initiation Document (PID).

The Committee were informed that the aim of the report was to integrate climate change and social value aspects into the PID process.

It was proposed by Councillor S Gibson, seconded by Councillor S Harding and –

Resolved:

That the amended Project Initiation Document (PID) be approved.

(Vote: For – Unanimous).

#### 410. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee discussed and updated the Forward Plan.

The Chair reiterated that the Committee would like to review Active Torridge KPIs at a future meeting.

Members noted that the QBR1, Planning Enforcement Plan and the 'Call In' from the Community and Resources Committee will be presented at the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

Members were informed that the Asset Management Plan and Procurement Frameworks have been added to the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> October.

A brief discussion occurred on the Housing Delivery Plan. The Chief Executive advised that it would be presented to the Senior Leadership Team in September.

Reference was made to Service Delivery Plans. Members noted that this is completed in March, as it forms part of the Budget process which is approved at the end of February.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.58 pm

Chair:

Date: