

TAMAR BRIDGE AND TORPOINT FERRY JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee held at Council Chamber, Saltash Town Council, Guildhall, Saltash PL12 6JX on Thursday 24 November 2016 Commencing at 10.30 am

Present:-

Cornwall Council Members

Bob Austin (Co-Chair)

Joe Ellison, Derek Holley and Mike Pearn MBE

Plymouth City Council Members

Martin Leaves (Co-Chair)

Mark Coker and George Wheeler

Apologies for absence: Brian Hobbs CC, Samantha Leaves PCC, Patrick Nicholson PCC and Bert Biscoe CC

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda No. 2)

TBTF/16 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2016

(Agenda No. 3)

TBTF/17 It was moved by Councillor Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Holley, and

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee held on 9 September 2016 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

A Member requested that in future, if possible, the dates of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee meetings co-ordinate with those of the Cabinet meetings of the constituent Authorities. It was agreed that the Democratic Officer would investigate and arrange if possible.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(Agenda No. 4)

TBTF/18 There were no questions from members of the public.

2016/17 BUDGET MONITORING

(Agenda No. 5.1)

TBTF/19 (This was taken after Agenda No. 6 (Tamar Bridge Suspension System Remedial Work) and Agenda No. 7 (General Manager's Quarterly Report))

Consideration was given to the previously circulated report in respect of 2016/17 Budget Monitoring, presented by the Service Accountant, Cornwall Council, in which attention was drawn to a typographical error in the report: Average Level of Interest Paid should read: "Actual Interest Paid Qtr 2, 2016-17, £0.398m".

In response to comments and requests from a Member in respect of the format for the presentation of figures in the report, the Service Accountant, Cornwall Council, acknowledged the suggestion that this be made meaningful to all readers and to separate income for Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, and stated that the presentation reflected normal public sector practice.

Arising from consideration of the report, it was proposed by Councillor Pearn MBE, seconded by Councillor Ellison, and

RESOLVED That the revised revenue forecast and capital programme for 2016/17 be approved.

There followed a presentation in graph format for the Joint Committee's information of:

- (i) Previous position as at May 2016;
- (ii) Current position without the proposed additional capital expenditure included;
- (iii) Effect of increasing the Bridge Office Development budget;
- (iv) Effect of adding the Bridge Suspension System remedial work;
- (v) Combined effect of additional capital spend; and
- (vi) Revenue funding options for new capital expenditure.

2017/18 REVENUE ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

(Agenda No. 5.2)

TBTF/20 (This item was taken after Agenda No. 6 (Tamar Bridge Suspension System Remedial Work), Agenda No.7 (General Manager's Quarterly Report) and Agenda No. 5.1 (2016/17 Budget Monitoring))

Consideration was given to the previously circulated report in respect of 2017/18 Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme, presented by the Service Accountant, Cornwall Council.

In response to comments and questions from Joint Committee members, the General Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, and Business Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, confirmed that:

- (i) Bridge salary figures included revised distributions related to posts shared with Torpoint Ferry;
- (ii) In respect of staff pension liabilities, discussions were currently being held with the Pension Scheme administration in respect of the assessment of Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry as a second tier body apparently on the grounds that it was unable to raise taxes;
- (iii) Although the resurfacing of the bridge deck was not an approved capital item, it had been included in the estimates. A separate report would be presented to the Joint Committee at a future meeting on this;
- (iv) Work was likely to begin in Spring 2018 in relation to raising tolls, assuming that a 12-month process was required.

Arising from consideration of the report and additional information, it was proposed by Councillor Martin Leaves, seconded by Councillor Wheeler, and

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

- 1. The proposed revenue budget for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- 2. The proposed capital programme, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and
- 3. The longer term forecast to 2020/21 be noted.

The motion was carried with 1 abstention.

TAMAR BRIDGE SUSPENSION SYSTEM REMEDIAL WORK

(Agenda No. 6)

TBTF/21 (This item was taken before Agenda No. 7 (General Manager's Quarterly Report), Agenda No. 5.1 (2016/17 Budget Monitoring) and Agenda No. 5.2 (2017/18 Revenue Estimates))

Consideration was given to the previously circulated report in respect of the Tamar Bridge Suspension System Remedial Work, presented by the General Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry.

In response to comments and questions from Joint Committee members, the General Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, and the Engineering Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, confirmed that:

- (i) It was possible that the defects in the bolts had been present when originally fitted;
- (ii) Hardness of the bolt material was tested using a device to measure impact and rebound;
- (iii) The replacement bolts would need to be custom made;

- (iv) The most significant issue was the over-hardness of the bolts, which could potentially result in brittleness and subsequent failure;
- (v) It appeared that the 6 cracked bolts were still taking some load;
- (vi) An analysis of one of the cracked bolts would be undertaken. This bolt would be replaced by a temporary bolt whilst testing took place;
- (vii) Testing the cracked bolt would provide valuable information to fully detail the existing problem and provide data for use in the future;
- (viii) It was not anticipated that defects in any other elements of the structure would be found when the bolts were removed;
- (ix) It would be necessary to start the work in the Spring to make the most of the better weather;
- (x) There was likely to be a limited supply market and it was proposed that a competitive dialogue be entered into with prospective contractors;
- (xi) Although the joint authorities had emergency reserves, it was unlikely that they would consider using them for this remedial work, as Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry were expected to be self financing;
- (xii) This was considered to be the most urgent project at present;
- (xiii) The current governance arrangements did not permit any flexibility with the budget to address the matter.

The Chairman stated that the matter of the governance arrangements and the urgency of the matter had been raised with Cornwall Council's Leader, as there was a need for this to be addressed for the future.

Members expressed the opinion that the bolts should be replaced in full and that this should be carried out as soon as possible.

Arising from consideration of the report and additional information, it was proposed by Councillor Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Hobbs, and

RESOLVED That

1. The report be noted;
2. A new Capital item for Tamar Bridge Suspension System Remedial Work is included in the proposed 2017/18 Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme with a budget provision of £6.0 million;
3. An update report be brought to the next meeting.

GENERAL MANAGER'S QUARTERLY REPORT

(Agenda No. 7)

TBTF/22 (This item was taken after Agenda No.6 (Tamar Bridge Suspension System Remedial Work) and before Agenda No. 5.1 (2016/17 Budget Monitoring) and Agenda No. 5.2 (2017/18 Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme))

Consideration was given to the previously circulated report in respect of the General Manager's Quarterly Report, presented by the General Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry.

In response to comments and questions from Joint Committee members, the General Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, the Business Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, and the Engineering Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry confirmed that:

- (i) In respect of Torpoint Ferry Operations: LYNHER was the newest ferry; however, the electronics system was over 10 years old and some obsolescence had been identified;
- (ii) In respect of Tamar Bridge Operations: There had been an increase in cash traffic during the period.
The highways works being carried out at Carkeel had had no significant impact, as much of the work was carried out at night.
- (iii) In respect of Bridge Inspection and Maintenance: Some cracks had been identified on aluminium components of one of the maintenance gantries, and repairs to the motors and brakes needed to be undertaken;
- (iv) In respect of the Bridge Office Development: It was necessary to request an increase in the budget from £3.97million to £4.7million for this as following the tender process, the bid from the preferred contractor was outside the forecasted sum; delays with the project had resulted in 2%-3% increase due to general inflation and building sector inflation; there had been an open tender process and some expected tenderers had declined to submit a tender as the pool was too large and they had chosen to pursue other projects; and due to the reduction in the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, a greater share of the cost of the project had to be found.
It was considered that there was little merit in putting the project to tender again as it was unlikely to attract any more tenders, bids submitted were likely to be more expensive and it would cause further delay.
Whilst it was acknowledged to be a risk that more monies would be required before the project was completed, it was considered to be unlikely.
- (v) In respect of the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Learning Centre: Three successive bids had now been made and a positive outcome was hoped for from the Assessment Panel scheduled to take place in early December.
- (vi) In respect of Bridge Lighting: A consultant had been engaged and was due to visit on 10 December 16. The consultant had been asked to provide a range of options for lighting. An open dialogue would be maintained with the Clerk to the Saltash Town Council in respect of progress on this consultancy.
- (vii) In respect of the Tamar Crossings Travel Analysis Study: The Chairman's request for a full report to be brought to the next Joint Committee meeting was agreed.

- (viii) In respect of the 2017-2020 Business Plan: A Member's request that the Business Plan be brought to the Joint Committee in full at its meeting scheduled for 10 March 2017 was agreed.
- (ix) In respect of Staff: Following a Member's suggestion that the target set for staff sickness absences set out in Table 3, Appendix 2 to the report, may be too low, given that staff were working outside in all weather conditions, it was agreed that for the future, a long term target and a short term target be reported.
- (x) In respect of Journey Time Monitoring: Approval was currently being sought for the Bluetruth journey monitoring system to be extended into other locations around the Bridge and Ferry.
At the previous meeting, a Member had asked for information to be provided in respect of journey times on special event days. The British Firework Championships had been held on 16 and 17 August 2016 and the journey time statistics for the Bridge and the Ferry showed that there was very little impact on journey times.
- (xi) In respect of the Strategic Risk Register (Appendix 4 to the report):
The risk ranking of Risk Reference S1 (Economic Depression/Recession) had been changed to reflect the perceived risk in the post-Referendum economic environment. It was now considered that potentially there could be a reduction in traffic flow if the economy went into recession or depression, which would affect income levels.
- (xii) Attention was drawn to the Financial Implications set out in the report in Section 6. Implications, in which it was clarified that the initial revenue costs of approximately £62,300 per annum related to the first year.
- (xiii) In respect of the targets for Number of Complaints Received and Payment of Suppliers within 30 Days of Invoice as set out in Table 3, Appendix 2 to the report, a Member's concern that i) the target for number of complaints received was too onerous, particularly as social media made making a complaint very easy; and that ii) delays in payments to small suppliers could potentially impact negatively on their cash flow, were acknowledged and it was agreed that all of the Key Performance Indicators would be reviewed.

Arising from consideration of the report and additional information, it was proposed by Councillor Ellison, seconded by Councillor Wheeler, and

RESOLVED That

1. The report be noted;
2. The budget provision for the Bridge Office Development capital project be increased to £4.7million in the proposed 2017/18 Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme;
3. The draft 2017-2020 Business Plan be presented to the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee at its meeting scheduled to take place on 10 March 2017;

4. An update report be brought to the next meeting.

ANY BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

(Agenda No. 8)

TBTF/23 There was no urgent business for consideration.

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm