

TAMAR BRIDGE AND TORPOINT FERRY JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee held at Council Chamber, The Guildhall, 12 Lower Fore Street, Saltash PL12 6JX on Friday 1 December 2017 Commencing at 10.00 am

Present:-

Cornwall Council Members

John Crago (Co-Chair)

Geoff Brown, Gary Davis, Derek Holley and Sam Tamlin

Plymouth City Council Members

Martin Leaves (Co-Chair)

Samantha Leaves and George Wheeler

Apologies for Mark Coker PCC and Patrick Nicholson PCC absence:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda No. 2)

TBTF/19 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2017

(Agenda No. 3)

TBTF/20 It was moved by the Joint Chairman (Cornwall), seconded by the Joint Chairman (Plymouth), and

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee held on 15 September 2017 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

- (i) Minute No. TBTF/14 (Tamar Crossing Travel Analysis Study), Bullet point (iii) to read: "...if traffic predictions remained at the same level..."

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

(Agenda No. 4)

TBTF/21 There were no questions or statements from the Public.

GENERAL MANAGER'S QUARTERLY REPORT

(Agenda No. 5)

TBTF/22 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 Ferry Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, confirmed that:

- (i) In respect of Torpoint Ferry Traffic Management Improvements:
 - The proposed work to the outdated marshalling systems would provide clearer direction, channel users more safely and provide improved traffic and pedestrian control. The improvement measures would include the provision of new LED lights to the Devonport queuing lanes, although it was necessary to consider the potential for light pollution affecting the nearby flats;
 - Consideration would also be given to enlarging the existing pedestrian shelters, which were acknowledged not to be currently user-friendly.
- (ii) In respect of Tamar Bridge Operations:
 - The reduction in traffic volumes appeared to be a general trend, as confirmed by Cornwall Council, and were therefore not exclusive to the Tamar Bridge;
 - The change in the volume of HGV traffic was potentially due to the completion of the road works at Carkeel.
- (iii) In respect of Tamar Bridge Suspension System Remedial Works:
 - The detailed method statement for the bolts replacement had now been agreed. It was considered desirable to undertake replacement of a few of the bolts first to better gauge the final cost of the works, which were expected to be known in approximately 5-6 weeks. It was anticipated that that the current budget could potentially cover the cost of the works;
 - It was acknowledged that the rockers were a critical part of the bridge structure. The wear in the pin joints in the pendle were checked every month. At current levels, it was anticipated that it would not be necessary to replace these for the next 4 -5 years. The rockers on the Tamar Bridge were different to those on the Forth Bridge that had failed, and due to the regular and frequent checks carried out on the Tamar Bridge, any potential failure would be more predictable.
A procedure for the replacements was currently in the process of being developed.
It was not yet known whether the replacement process would require the Bridge to be closed for any period of time;
 - A Member's request that an update be provided to the Joint Committee in 12 months was acknowledged.
- (iv) In respect of the Bridge Office Development:
 - A brise soleil was an architectural device to reduce heat gain by deflecting sunlight from a building;
- (v) In respect of the Toll Revenue:

- A typographical error in the report was acknowledged. It was confirmed that Paragraph 3.28 should read: "Toll revenue in the 12 month period ending 31 October 2017 was 0.3% higher than in the preceding 12 months.";
 - As traffic volume was less than anticipated, the financial model had been adjusted to reflect the reduced income;
- (vi) In respect of Health and Safety:
- The accident involving a member of the public was not due to current operational procedures and no additional risk had been identified;
 - Following any accident or sickness event, a review with the member of staff was carried out;
 - The average age of the ferry staff was in the late 40s, and there were no light duties available to assist employees to get back into work;
 - The sickness levels of Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry were worse than other ferry operations, except for the Woolwich Ferry. The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry terms and conditions were better than other ferry operators, except for the Woolwich Ferry;
 - Discussions would be held with the HR manager to reassess the format of the Health and Safety report.
- (vii) In respect of Journey Time Monitoring:
- Some progress was being made on extending the provision of journey time sensors along the A38, but the locations had yet to be decided and agreed by Highways England. Joint Committee members would be consulted on the locations of the sensors;
 - A typographical error in the report was acknowledged. It was confirmed that Paragraph 3.42 should read: "...an initial KPI for the limited zone covering the bridge structure has been included in Appendix 2.";
 - The Ferry journey time figures for the 3 month period August to October 2017 were very similar to those for the preceding 3 month period;
 - The journey times for the Ferry were assessed from time of entry to the marshalling lanes to time of alighting from the ferry on the other side of the river;
 - There were generally no specific patterns of performance of the ferries. Lynher was the newest ferry and the incidents it had experienced were coincidental. It was also the most southern ferry and consequently it bore the brunt of south westerly winds. The shape of the seabed under the ferry was also a factor affecting its performance. Consideration had been given to swapping Lynher to be the middle of the three ferries, but it would be a significant operation to effect. However, the possibility of achieving this would be further examined, and a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Joint Committee;
 - Traffic accidents on the Bridge were not due to lane changing by drivers; they were usually rear end shunts. CCTV cameras monitored the lanes and the footage they provided was closely scrutinised.

Following consideration of the report and information provided, it was proposed by the Joint Chairman (Plymouth), seconded by the Joint Chairman (Cornwall) and

RESOLVED That

1. The report be noted;
2. An updated report be brought to the next meeting.

2017/18 BUDGET MONITORING

(Agenda No. 6.1)

TBTF/23 Consideration was given to the previously circulated report in respect of 2017/18 Budget Monitoring, presented by the Service Accountant, Cornwall Council, and the Business Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry.

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

- (i) In respect of the Executive Summary:
 - A typographical error relating to the anticipated reserve balance was acknowledged. It was confirmed that Paragraph 1.2 should read: "The revised forecast currently anticipates a reserve balance at 31 March 2018 of £4.511m.
- (ii) In respect of the Bridge:
 - The increase in the training budget of £7K was intended for specialised training. Overall, there was a good training programme for Bridge and Ferry staff. Most of the training was provided in house. Six staff members had been trained as trainers and were now providing training to the Contractor's staff, Fire and Rescue Service staff as well as to Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry staff. This training covered all health and safety requirements, which was provided on a regular and frequent basis.
- (iii) In respect of Corporate:
 - The reduction of £6K related to corporate support from Plymouth City Council, ie the time given to Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry matters by the Joint Engineer (Plymouth) and the Business Partner (Finance), Plymouth City Council.
- (iv) In respect of Income:
 - The reduction in forecast for the bridge toll cash income of £178K was due to the reduction in traffic levels. The effect had been extrapolated to the following financial year;
- (v) In respect of Purpose of Report, paragraph 2.10:
 - It was acknowledged that the revision in the forecast outturn for 2017/18 represented a variance of 17%.

- (vi) In respect of liaison with the Fire and Rescue Service, it was confirmed that liaisons were maintained with both the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services, particularly the latter as it was the closest responder.

Following consideration of the report and information provided, it was proposed by the Joint Chairman (Plymouth), seconded by the Joint Chairman (Cornwall), and

RESOLVED That the revised Revenue Forecast and Capital Programme for 2017/18 be approved.

2018/19 REVENUE ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 6.2)

TBTF/24 Consideration was given to a presentation given by the Business Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, also tabled at the meeting, in respect of the 2018/19 Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme, which included:

- The Reserves position reported to September 2017 Joint Committee meeting;
- The updated Reserves position following adjustments;
- The projected Reserves as at December 2017;
- Comparison with previous projection reported to the Joint Committee in September 2017;
- A comparison of Expenditure against previous estimates;
- Changes in Revenue estimates;
- A comparison of Capital Funding, showing current forecast and Outturn 2016/17 position; and
- Estimated Risks and Uncertainties;

Consideration was also given to the previously circulated report in respect of the 2018/19 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, the Business Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, and the Service Accountant, Cornwall Council, confirmed that:

- (i) In respect of the proposed toll revision, a period of 12 months had been allowed for the process to be completed, which included submission to the Constituent Authorities, public consultation and submission to the Department for Transport (DfT). The process had been completed within a year on previous occasions;
- (ii) A Member's concern regarding a variable toll option was acknowledged, as was his suggestion that the cost-neutral position of this option be emphasised in the submission to DfT;

- (iii) A further toll increase in the mid 2020's was likely. However, the aim was to ensure that necessary improvements had been made before this was effected;
- (iv) The proposed works to the parapets and rockers were not included in the Revenue Estimates. The proposed toll increase had been brought forward to keep the Reserves above £2m, but it was not essential for them to be kept at that level should unexpected works arise;
- (v) The Reserves level was originally agreed in 2010/2011 and would now need to be reviewed. At that time, it represented the income for 3 months, which was the lead time for any emergency meeting of the Joint Committee and the subsequent approval processes involved;
- (vi) A Member's concern that the Reserves sum appeared to be excessively prudent when income from interest was significantly low was acknowledged. However it was noted that the Reserves sum did not exclusively comprise cash.
- (vii) A Member's concern that the revenue from the toll increase could potentially be used as general revenue was acknowledged;
- (viii) It was accepted as a general rule of thumb that a recession occurred every 10 years, and in this event a recession would be due shortly. This had not been factored into the Revenue estimates and Capital programme;
- (ix) It had been agreed with Cornwall Council that £1m of the balances, above the £2m Reserves, would be invested in a higher interest account;
- (x) The joint enterprise could not borrow directly, so Cornwall Council borrowed on its behalf at a highly competitive rate;
- (xi) In respect of Corporate, paragraph 2.5: - A Member's concern that paragraph 3 needed more detail was acknowledged. However it was noted that this was part of an indicative budget;
- (xii) In respect of Bridge Kerb Units, paragraph 2.8: - The contract details had not yet been finalised; however by late January or early February 2018 the details of lane closures would be better known and the Saltash Town Council, Cornwall Council and the public could then be fully informed;
- (xiii) In respect of the variations between the revised 2017/18 and 2018/19 original estimates (agenda page 44), particularly in respect of grounds maintenance:- The difference was due to rock stabilisations works having been undertaken;
- (xiv) A Member's concern that plain English, specifically in respect of 're-profiling', should be used in reports was acknowledged.

Arising from consideration of the report and information provided, it was proposed by the Joint Chairman (Cornwall), seconded by the Joint Chairman (Plymouth), and

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

1. The following be approved:

- The proposed Revenue Budget for 2018/19, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and
- The proposed Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;

2. The following be noted:

- The longer term forecast to 2020/21.

ANY BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

(Agenda No. 7)

TBTF/25 The following item was accepted by the Chairman as urgent due to the need for the Joint Committee to receive information prior to the next meeting:

(i) Network Rail

A Member drew attention to the work being undertaken by Saltash Town Council in leading renovations to the station buildings at Saltash, and also to the potential for the development of a park and ride service near Saltash, both of which could potentially affect traffic flows across the Bridge.

In response, the General Manager, Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, stated that although a park and ride option was being examined, there were no firm proposals as yet.

The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Infrastructure, Cornwall Council, added that Cornwall Council was pursuing a half hourly rail service between Penzance and Plymouth, and acknowledged the work undertaken to advance improvements at Saltash station.

Following consideration of the above matter, it was moved by the Joint Chairman (Cornwall), seconded by the Joint Chairman (Plymouth), and

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm