

Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee

2024-2025 Annual Business Plan

Contents

Contents.....	2
Message from the Chairmen	3
The Context for the Annual Business Plan.....	4
Long Term Strategy.....	4
Meeting Customer Expectations	5
Budget Context	8
Performance Targets.....	10
Table 1 Safe Services.....	10
Table 2 Reliable Services.....	11
Monitoring Indicators.....	13

Message from the Chairmen

This Annual Business Plan extends beyond the last approved the four-year Strategic Plan 2018-2022 agreed by the Committee in September 2017.

The Plan represents a continuation of an interim approach whilst the Parent Authorities, the Committee and management complete a review of the approach to business planning during the coming year. This work follows receipt of reports following an external review undertaken in early 2023.

The coming 12 months will, like most recent years be extremely busy and challenging. The organisation will make a further application to raise tolls, to compensate for the extreme inflationary pressures placed on limited reserves during 2022 and 2023 and the long term change in travel patterns which followed the Covid pandemic. The second of three refits will reduce service at Torpoint for a number of weeks in April and early May and there will be further impacts on service to complete work rebuilding the shoreside chain gantries associated with that ferry. Major works on the bridge's main cables and improving the structure's fire protection system later in the year will be technically challenging and great effort will be made to ensure that the impact on traffic flows will be minimised during refurbishment of toll booths. These projects reflect the Committee's continuing recognition of the need to ensure that the service provided by these essential and strategic crossings under its control remains robust and that programmes take a long view in maintaining the key assets.

During the course of the year the Committee and management will develop and refine the Tamar 2050 programme appended to this report and implement actions from that programme including developing and refining long term investments such as freeflow tolling and decarbonisation of the current generation of ferries.

This Plan demonstrates our ongoing commitment to delivering a safe, reliable and efficient service to our users and it is intended that this document will form the basis of management reports to Members during the course of the year.

A summary of progress made against the Plan will accompany the Annual Report published in draft form in June 2024.

Councillor Martin Worth
Joint Chairman
Cornwall Council

Councillor Neil Hendy
Joint Chairman
Plymouth City Council

The Context for the Annual Business Plan

Long Term Strategy

Plans for the longer term sustain the organisation's mission to provide safe, reliable and efficient crossings of the River Tamar. These plans are influenced by the Local Transport Plans of the Joint Authorities.

The physical and financial resources must continue to be available for major tasks such as resurfacing and repainting the Bridge and undertaking refits of the Ferries. Maintenance cycles may span consecutive Business Plan cycles, therefore while the medium-term financial plan spans four years, potential maintenance requirements beyond that period must also be considered within the organisation's general business plans.

The undertaking must maintain a clear strategy for the future to accommodate changes in traffic demand, user expectations, legislation and other factors that may stimulate changes in the way the undertaking operates and may require improvements to facilities. Therefore, potential change beyond the four year period of the medium-term financial plan must also be considered.

Continuity with the previous Strategic Framework

The Strategic Plan that expired in March 2022 contained a number of broad goals for the four-year period April 2018 to March 2022. Those goals remain relevant and are recorded below, with the continuing work to progress each goal. This approach is considered to be the most effective during a period when the organisation is developing new strategic approaches through a strategic sub-group of Committee Members and the Tamar 2050 programme.

Specific actions to achieve the desired outcomes are provided in KPI tables later in the document. These tables will allow Members, users and other stakeholders to monitor the performance of the service.

Strategic Goal: Meeting Customer Expectations

- Achieve or exceed service delivery KPIs
- providing more payment options for TamarTag customers
- providing a greater range of communication routes online
- undertaking major projects to ensure Bridge and Ferries are maintained to appropriate standards
- proactively communicate with customers
- expand scope and improve detail of traffic data

Strategic Goal: Fiscally Sustainable

- ensure that income can fund forecast expenditure
- act on external reviews of operational efficiency
- routinely report progress and update financial positions
- improve management of toll debtors
- pursue the ability to index-link tolls

Strategic Goal: Transparent Governance and Clear Decision Making Processes

- consider alternative organisational models within risk and business efficiency consultancies.
- adopt a revised approach to long term planning and business planning
- publish additional information and raise awareness of public meetings
- work towards a schedule of Committee meeting in Cornwall
- consider ways in which the crossings might assist the Parent Authorities in addressing the Climate Emergency
- review legislation and governance

Strategic Goal: A Modern, Diverse and Well Trained Workforce

- act on workforce feedback and progress any recommendations from external review
- consider ways to mitigate recruitment issues in key specialist posts

Strategic Goal: Quality and Appropriate Standards

- improve pedestrian safety
- demonstrate our safety culture
- provide assurance about our approach to the environment
- maintain appropriate regulatory standards
- reduce environmental impact and ensure energy use is moderated

Actions Plan for 2024-25

The following detailed actions to meet the 2024-25 goals incorporate elements of the Tamar 2050 programme:

Meeting Customer Expectations

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Provide more flexible Direct Debit scheme for TamarTag customers	Late 2024	Providing more payment options for cash and TamarTag customers
Provide online applications for new Tamar Tag customers	April 2024	Providing more payment options for Tamar Tag customers
Develop a new communications and engagement plan to encompass the range of users and ensure key stakeholders have a voice and opportunity be involved with the crossing	April 2024	Proactively communicate with customers
Expand the proactive customer engagement policy through the establishment of a resident/haulier focus group	By end of 2024	Proactively communicate with customers

Complete review of initial study assessing the potential benefits of free flow tolling on the bridge in improving capacity and journey time	May 2024	Achieve or exceed service delivery KPIs and provide more payment options for TamarTag (and other) customers
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Fiscally Sustainable

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Apply for an order to revise charges, participate in process and implement change if approved	April 2024 through to November 2024	Ensure that the crossings remain financially sustainable.
Implement actions within a marketing plan anticipated in Spring 2024 as part of the Tamar 2050 programme	Through financial year 2024-2025	Ensure that the crossings remain financially sustainable.
Provide budget monitoring reports to Committee with updates to long-term model	Quarterly	Routinely report progress and update financial positions
Progress efficiency opportunities identified by March 2024	Through financial year 2024-2025	Ensure that the crossings remain financially sustainable.
Determine and progress the preferred route to enable index-linking of tolls	Ongoing	Reduce income risk
Progress recommendations from 2023 efficiency review of the undertaking	Through financial year	Assurance that best practice is being deployed to ensure that crossings represent value for money

Transparent Governance and Clear Decision Making Processes

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Expand independent publication of information	Ongoing	Publish additional information and raise awareness of public meetings
Undertake review of governance arrangements and consider new frameworks to improve organisational efficiency	By end of 2024	Effective and transparent corporate oversight and challenge

opportunities for water crossings or wider transport integration and sustainability, together with other bodies.	Ongoing	consider ways in which the crossings might assist the Parent Authorities in addressing the Climate Emergency
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A Modern, Diverse and Well Trained Workforce

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Further embed and develop apprenticeship schemes.	Ongoing	mitigate recruitment issues in key specialist posts and improve age diversity within the organisation
Work towards a greater gender balance in the organisation through involvement in Women Into STEM events and with other employers at fairs and event to raise the understanding of careers in engineering.	Ongoing	Continue the actions detailed in Gender Pay Gap Reports and mitigate recruitment issues in key specialist posts
Address any organisation issues raised in external reviews	Through financial year	review legislation and governance
Support flexile retirement to allow individuals to make different choices about retirement and support flexible working generally.	Ongoing	mitigate recruitment issues in key specialist posts and improve diversity within the organisation
Continue to develop both individuals and teams with training opportunities appropriate to the job.	Ongoing	mitigate recruitment issues in key specialist posts and demonstrate our safety culture

Quality and Appropriate Standards

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Upgrade traffic control systems at Torpoint and Devonport	2024	Improve pedestrian safety
Progress designs to convert power generation on one ferry from diesel to battery	Complete design work by March 2025	Provide assurance about our approach to the environment

Complete certification for Occupational Health and Safety Management to ISO 45001 Standard	Summer 2024	Demonstrate our safety culture
Complete certification process for Environmental Management System to ISO14001 Standard	Autumn 2024	Provide assurance about our approach to the environment
Continue technical inspection programme at Tamar Bridge	Ongoing	Maintaining appropriate regulatory standards
Maintain ferries to classification society standards	Ongoing	Maintaining appropriate regulatory standards

Budget Context

The approved budgets for 2024-2025 are reported below.

Estimated income figures assume that traffic will be affected by major works at the bridge during the year and there is no growth in traffic volumes at Torpoint Ferry.

Forecast Income

£s

Toll Revenue (Bridge)	15,527,000
Toll Revenue (Ferry)	1,774,000
Tag Related Fees	460,000
Income from Agency Charges	553,000
Rents & Miscellaneous Income	216,000
Grant Income	0
Investment Income and Interest	5,000

TOTAL FORECAST REVENUE

18,535,000

Forecast Expenditure

Bridge Operations & Maintenance	5,482,000
Ferry Operations & Maintenance	6,912,000
Learning Centre	229,000
Corporate Expenses	812,000
Interest Payments (cost of capital funding)	1,698,000
Repayment of Capital (Revenue Provision)	3,589,000

TOTAL FORECAST EXPENDITURE

18,722,000

Forecast Deficit for Year

£187,000

Forecast toll income assumes toll revision from 1 November 2024. Authority for the increase must be given by the Secretary of State for Transport.

Reserves

The forecast deficit will mean that the reserve maintained as contingency will reduce from a forecast £1,677,000 at 31 March 2024 to a forecast £1,490,000 at the end of March 2025

Capital Works

The borrowing required to fund capital works during the year is anticipated to be £8,900,000.

Performance Targets

In addition to the quarterly reports on progress made to the Joint Committee, progress against the measures below will be published on our website.

Table 1 Safe Services

Description	KPI	Target	Why this is important?
Number of accidents involving members of the public	Number of reportable incidents and accidents involving the public at both crossings	Zero and maintain	Public safety is an integral part of our business
Reportable incidents and minor accidents involving employees	Number of reportable incidents and accidents involving employees at both crossings	Reduce to zero and maintain zero incidents and accidents.	Staff safety is an integral part of our business. Need to mitigate risk to the lowest practicable level to avoid further accidents.
Lost time – employees	Days lost due to accidents	Less than 20 days	Provides a measure of the safety of the work environment. Reduces costs associated with absence or reduced capability following accidents.

Table 2 Reliable Services

Description	KPI	Target	Why this is important?
Bridge traffic lane availability	Peak time lane availability	>99.5%	Measures success of traffic management and reliability of infrastructure. Ensuring that lanes are open is key to ensuring that journeys are predictable and reduces the risk of accidents.
	Total lane availability	>98.5%	
Bridge toll booth availability	% of scheduled booth hours achieved	>99%	In addition to helping to ensure that journey times are predictable, the measure assists assessment of the performance of the contractor
Ferry scheduled crossings availability	Peak Time scheduled crossings achieved	To be confirmed	Measures success of vessel management and reliability of infrastructure. Predictable service is essential for customers to plan the best mode of transport.
	Off-Peak scheduled crossings achieved	>99%	
Ferry waiting/journey times	Average journey time from entry of waiting area to exit off ferry Peak journey time from entry of waiting area to exit off ferry	To be confirmed (system extension pending)	Measures success of vessel management and reliability of infrastructure. Predictable journey times are essential for customers to plan the best mode of transport.
Bridge journey times	Average journey time between A38 Carkeel & St Budeaux junctions	< 5mins 45 sec < 6 mins	Measures success of traffic management and reliability of infrastructure. Predictable journey times are essential for customers to plan the best mode of transport.
	Peak average journey time between A38 Carkeel & St Budeaux junctions		

Table 3 Effective and Efficient Services

Description	KPI	Target	Why this is important?
Expenditure	Variance against budgets	Monthly review within 10% of profiled spend	Cost control, financial management, efficiency.
Tag Usage	Overall usage Peak usage	≈60% ≈80%	Maintains plaza capacity.
Complaints	Response time	95% of complaints responded to within 10 working days.	Those making complaints remain aware that their comments are valued and investigations are prioritised.
Payment within 30 days of invoice date	% of invoices are paid within 30 days	>95%	Payment within terms assists the relationship with suppliers and improves validity of financial monitoring process
Staff sickness absence	Days absence per employee per annum	Average of <9 days	Reflects a healthy workforce and sound HR practices.
Energy recovered waste incineration	non-hazardous waste to be diverted from landfill for energy recovery	60% diversion	Reduction of waste improves efficiency and demonstrates our concern for the wider community
Recycled waste	non-hazardous waste diverted from landfill to be recycled	40% diversion	

Monitoring Indicators

In addition to the key indicators that measure the organisation's own performance, other indicators can provide information on aspects of service delivery which can by varying degrees be outside the control of the organisation.

The organisation also reports and monitors measurements widely used in the public sector and which are appropriate to report for reasons of transparency.

The indicators shown in the table below will be monitored.

Annual reviews will report the actions that will be taken in the course of the year that are likely to impact on these areas.

Description	Monitor Indicators	Why this is important to service users	Why a target is not appropriate or measure is partly or wholly outside our control
Complaints – Number received	Number	As an indicator of customer satisfaction	We wish to expand the ways in which users can communicate issues and encourage feedback. Any target works against this aim
Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) occurring within Joint Committee controlled highway.	No of RTCs within Tamar Bridge/Saltash Tunnel tidal flow system. No of RTCs within Torpoint Ferry traffic control area.	We must provide a safe environment to users and our staff. RTCs impact on service delivery, frequently requiring at least partial closure of access to or from vessels and roadways.	Many RTCs are due largely to driver error.
Incidents of recorded anti- social behaviour on Joint Committee property.	Reported incidents at each crossing	Users expect a safe and secure environment	Threatening, anti-social or illegal behaviour is the responsibility of the those performing the act(s).

Tamar 2050 – A programme of Transformation and Modernisation

	Project/ Commitment	Overview	Timeframe
1.	A transformed and efficient operation	<p>There have been significant efficiencies delivered to date. However, we won't stop reviewing further opportunities that could continue to minimise the cost of the operation of the crossings. Transformational efficiency programmes have been delivered across both Parent Authorities and it is expected that there could be some replication/support of these to the Crossings.</p> <p>We will commit to reviewing how the crossings function, including the Governance and Acts under which the crossings operate, with a view of looking at the best fit for service delivery both at a local and national level in the future.</p>	Identify opportunities by March 24
2.	Optimising Income	Our crossings are an incredible and iconic asset and investment in the ancillary buildings mean that we have exceptional commercial space with which to advertise and host events. We will put a marketing plan together to explore and maximise all of these potential opportunities over the coming years.	Identify opportunities by March 24
3.	Growing and investing in local talent and celebrating Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM)	The crossings are a major local employer, providing crucial services to the local community and region. We will commit to continuing to provide apprenticeships for local people, expand our innovative programmes and ensure that we build on our women in STEMM events. Growing local talent is important to the community and the economy of the region.	2024 >
4.	Technology to improve effective toll operation	Introducing contactless payments in 2020 at the Bridge and 2023 at the Ferry was an important step forward in improving efficiencies of the toll operation. We will now commit to investigate whether 'card only' booths could operate with the appropriate forward signage and without the need for manual intervention.	Decision 2024
5.	Political, Business and Local engagement – improving our connections with stakeholders.	We will commit to producing a new communications and engagement plan to encompass the range of users and ensure key stakeholders have a voice and opportunity be involved with the crossing We will commit to a resident/haulier focus group and engage with our local MPs to ensure that we have a voice nationally.	March 2024

Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry 2024-2025 Business Plan

6.	Keeping toll prices low and providing Toll price certainty	<p>RPI is the key to smoothing the price rises out and providing a degree of certainty for regular users of the crossing. Price rises don't have to happen every year and we will be open and transparent about needs of the crossings to operate that will in turn be important for individual and business planning.</p> <p>We will commit to continue our liaison with Government regarding the crossings and seek financial support regarding our investment strategy.</p> <p>Tolling is currently the only means to finance the crossings and our 'user pays' policy, will be focused to ensure the crossings remain one of the cheapest tolled crossings in the country.</p>	2024 - 2050
7.	Free-flow tolling	<p>We are committed to investigating the opportunity introduce free flow tolling on the bridge, that will hopefully bring capacity and journey time improvements. This investment will hopefully take the crossing to a new level for ease of use and future proof operations for a new era of travel.</p>	March 2024
8.	Carbon neutral ferry operations	<p>Decarbonisation is a policy of both parent authorities and is very much in their interest as a means of helping to address the Climate Emergency we face. We will commit to seek external opportunities for funding streams and review our new ferry procurement programme to progress options.</p>	2030
9.	Improved Tamar connectivity and access – the bigger picture	<p>The Tamar River - a wonderful environment, habitat for wildlife is the crossings play a key role in the newly formed Tamar Valley National Landscape, Mount Edgcumbe House & Country Park and the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park providing links and gateways regarding development and economic integration. We are fortunate to have such an asset and will commit to see if there are more opportunities for water crossings or wider transport integration and sustainability Recognising the stunning tourist opportunity of the Tamar but more importantly the critical travel to work and health role they play for our SE Cornwall and Plymouth communities. In addition, the Crossings need to be central to discussions about improving our connectivity, particularly the GWR, bus and ferry links.</p>	2024 - 2030