

Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee

2023-2024 Annual Business Plan

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Message from the Chairmen

This Annual Business Plan extends beyond the last approved 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 consider alternative approaches to business planning during the coming year. The provision of a single year plan ensures continuity whilst a review being undertaken with external assistance is ongoing.

The coming year will be an extremely busy and testing 12 months. The organisation needs to address the stresses caused by the current economic situation, particularly relating to inflation and increased energy costs, and the ongoing effects of the Covid pandemic on our income. The first of three refits will reduce service at Torpoint for a number of weeks in April and early May and major works on the bridge's main cables and articulation elements later in the year will be technically challenging. 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.

It is that long view approach that has convinced the Committee to undertake strategic reviews of operational efficiency and the approach to long term business planning.

The 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 Jonathan Drean
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 with the assistance of consultants.

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 an external review 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 meetings in Cornwall in addition to meeting in Plymouth
- 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 2023-24

The following detailed actions to meet the 2023-24 goals:

Meeting Customer Expectations

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Provide more flexible Direct Debit scheme for TamarTag customers	Spring 2023	Providing more payment options for cash and TamarTag customers
Expand the proactive customer engagement policy	Through 2023	Proactively communicate with customers

Fiscally Sustainable

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Review charging structure	Summer 2023	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
Determine and progress the preferred route to enable index-linking of tolls	Ongoing	Reduce income risk
Complete an independent efficiency review of the undertaking	April 2023, report to Committee, June 2023	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	Through financial year	Effective and transparent corporate oversight and challenge

A Modern, Diverse and Well Trained Workforce

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Implement recommendations from 2022 employee survey	Ongoing	Demonstrate value of workforce feedback
Review job design when vacancies occur to encourage more flexible working and part-time opportunities	Ongoing	Continue the actions detailed in Gender Pay Gap Reports
Review Employee Terms and Conditions	December 2023	Complete the actions detailed in external reports and action plans
Address any organisation issues raised in external reviews	Through financial year	Review legislation and governance

Quality and Appropriate Standards

ACTION	Timeframe	RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRESSING STRATEGIC GOALS
Upgrade traffic control systems at Torpoint and Devonport	2023 (Assumes recruitment of key staff)	Improve pedestrian safety
Certification of Occupational Health and Safety Management to ISO 45001 Standard	Autumn 2023	Demonstrate our safety culture
Certification of Environmental Management System to ISO14001 Standard	Autumn 2023	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 2023-2024 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)	14,211,000
Toll Revenue (Ferry)	1,835,000
Tag Related Fees	460,000
Income from Agency Charges	446,000
Rents & Miscellaneous Income	110,000
Grant Income	0
Investment Income and Interest	0
TOTAL FORECAST REVENUE	17,062,000
Forecast Expenditure	
Bridge Operations & Maintenance	5,431,000
Ferry Operations & Maintenance	6,556,000
Learning Centre	135,000
Corporate Expenses	565,000
Interest Payments (cost of capital funding)	1,673,000
Repayment of Capital (Revenue Provision)	3,124,000
TOTAL FORECAST EXPENDITURE	17,484,000
Forecast Deficit for Year	£422,000

Reserves

The forecast deficit will mean that the reserve maintained as contingency will reduce from a forecast £614,000 at 31 March 2023 to a forecast £192,000 at the end of March 2024.

Capital Works

The borrowing required to fund capital works during the year is anticipated to be £10,650,000.

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		
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	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	< 6 mins	

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	

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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.

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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).
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