



Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Title: **Marine Economy Action Plan**

Wards Affected: **All Wards in Torbay**

To: **Harbour Committee** On: **11th June 2012**

Key Decision: **No**

Change to Budget: **No** Change to Policy Framework: **No**

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1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers

1.1 This report is seeking approval for the Marine Economy Action Plan for Torbay. The Plan identifies the potential for development of the marine economy and outlines appropriate actions and the investment needed to deliver positive outcomes for Torbay. These include:

- increased full time employment
- improved rates of business growth
- development of new markets for Torbay businesses
- increased earnings
- Improved transport links to and within Torbay to facilitate movement of goods, services and people and to encourage investment.

2. Recommendation(s) for decision

2.1 That the Harbour Committee endorses the Marine Economy Action Plan.

3. Key points and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The current Economic Strategy identifies development of the marine economy as a key action for the future economic development of Torbay. It recognises there is potential to better support marine science, engineering and leisure in Torbay given that the area is ideally situated for marine industries. It is home to a cluster of entrepreneurial businesses while South Devon College delivers courses in marine engineering.

3.2 In the autumn of 2011 the Mayor requested that the TDA produce an action plan for the sector. In order to do this it was first necessary to identify what exists in

Torbay before researching the opportunities for growth. The actions identified within this plan will help to improve Torbay's economic performance which in turn will reduce child poverty, reduce the cost of deprivation to the public sector, improve job opportunities and encourage our young people to remain in the Bay. Specific community plan indicators that the project will contribute to include;

- Increase value and improve economic performance of key sectors
 - Encourage appropriate and sympathetic diversification of the economic base
 - Provide business and infrastructure support for economic growth and job creation
- 3.3 In order to capitalise on planned investment the Action Plan contains a number of projects which are, albeit at varying stages, already underway. Examples of this include the Third Harbour, Northern Arm and a watersports centre of excellence. This action plan makes no attempt to attribute costs to proposed projects, only to consider priority, benefits and potential lead/partners.
- 3.4 Outline benefits have been considered against each of the proposed actions in order to meet the aims and outcomes identified within the Economic Strategy. The intended outcomes of approving this action plan include:
- Increase the number of businesses operating in the marine economy;
 - Increase the number of people employed in the marine economy;
 - Increase the proportion of people employed all year round in the marine economy;
 - Improve the productivity of existing marine economy businesses;
 - Stimulate or identify new markets for marine businesses to provide goods and services for;
 - Attract new marine economy businesses into Torbay;
 - Enhance the existing tourism offer;
 - Enhance and sustain the environment and Tor Bay's natural assets; and
 - Enhance opportunities for disadvantaged people in Torbay.
- 3.5 Costings for individual actions within the Action Plan were not undertaken however the Plan does include a summary of potential funding sources that could be explored further as individual actions are developed.

For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the Supporting Information.

**Karen Whibley
Regeneration Policy Officer
Torbay Development Agency**

Supporting information to Report

A1. Introduction and history

A1.1 The adopted Economic Strategy explores a number of potential opportunities for improving the economy in the Bay stating:

‘There is potential to support better marine science, engineering and leisure in Torbay given that the area is ideally situated for marine industries. It is home to a cluster of entrepreneurial businesses while the local South Devon College delivers courses in marine engineering.

Torbay is situated in one of the most attractive coastline locations in Britain with access to excellent seafood and fish stocks. The area has been home to a fishing industry for centuries with Brixham synonymous with the British fishing tradition. Building on this sea access, tradition and reputation there is scope for the development of fish and seafood farms and local value added processing which would support the aims of the tourism strategy in developing a higher value proposition for visitors.’

A1.2 During 2010 the TDA also produced an Inward Investment Strategy which supports the aims of the Economic Strategy 2010-15. This strategy prioritises industries that are attractive to inward investment. Sectors such as advanced electronics, healthcare and environmental science have all been identified for potential development in the Torbay economy. They are highly productive sectors, which to a lesser extent already exist, and with the right inward investment support could develop further and help build the Torbay economy for the future. Of relevance to this brief is:

- Environmental Science/Marine Technology - the Astra Zeneca laboratory in Brixham is world class. There is an opportunity to leverage the proximity to the high quality research in Plymouth (Marine Lab) and Exeter (University).
- Marine Engineering – currently the marine engineering industry in Torbay is a cluster of small businesses. However there appears to be a skills base which is supported by courses at South Devon College and there is anecdotal evidence of demand from local fishing and leisure users. That demand needs to be tested and planning position needs to be established.
- Fish/ seafood: Aquaculture and Processing - the Bay is a wonderful asset but local production and added value processing is limited. Opportunities for seafood and possible fish farming should be explored. Enhancement of the Brixham brand will be important.

A1.3 Development of the Action Plan was undertaken in stages. The first being to understand existing or planned activity and a review of the strategies relevant to this work.

Research on a sub sector level was then undertaken at both a local and national level in order to understand key trends, opportunities and barriers to growth. The sub sectors being:

- Commercial Fishing/Fish Farming – commercial fishing (catching), fish

- farming, wholesale/retail and transportation and fish processing
- Marine Engineering – naval, leisure, commercial and offshore renewables
- Maritime Leisure – recreational use of the marine environment including angling, sailing, boating, nature watching, scuba diving, surfing, kayaking and swimming
- Marine Science – oil and gas exploration, defence, renewable energy, environmental monitoring, academic research, security, oceanography, surveying and meteorology
- Renewable Energy – wind, wave, tidal stream and tidal range
- Short Sea Shipping, Cruise Ships and Ferries – movement of cargo and passengers by sea between ports.

This element also included identification of known businesses operating in the marine sector utilising knowledge gained from existing work and the TDA's access to business databases. Relevant skill provision in the Torbay area was assessed together with identification of marine related facilities and infrastructure.

A consultation exercise then followed contacting key businesses, agencies and stakeholders to ascertain the potential for growth, barriers to growth and ideas for growth in the sector. Consultation was undertaken through a mix of face to face and telephone conversations. A list of those consulted is included later in this report.

The results of the consultation were then reviewed in order to identify and test the key opportunities arising with project stakeholders. A prioritisation workshop was then held in order to:

- Test proposed ideas/actions in terms of feasibility and fit with other initiatives and environment/planning constraints
- Identify other potential actions/solutions
- Prioritise actions in terms of importance and timing
- Assign responsibility for proposed actions

The final stage was the production of the action plan detailing developments necessary to support the marine sector to the maximum benefit of the Torbay economy.

A2. Risk assessment of preferred option

A2.1 Outline of significant key risks

The principal delivery risks relate to issues around funding and the use of other powers or freedoms to bring forward actions. Failure to deliver economic growth within Torbay and a failure to ensure that the benefits of growth are equally spread will result in a worsening of the disparities which exist within the Bay.

If this Plan is not approved and implemented there is a risk of the sector underperforming as identified opportunities are not exploited. This could lead to a reduction in business rates payable and increased need for intervention.

If the activities do not accrue the anticipated benefits there is a reputational risk to the Council.

The adoption of a Marine Economy Action Plan will enable the Council's to target resources effectively in order to gain maximum benefit.

A2.2 Remaining risks

There are no remaining risks.

A3 Other Options

A3.1 Not to develop a sector specific action plan: This option was discounted given the need to build on existing strengths in order to diversify the economy in Torbay.

Not to focus on the marine sector at all would leave the development of this sector lacking focus and credibility.

A4 Summary of resource implications

A4.1 There are no immediate resource implications resulting from approval of the action plan however delivery of the actions set out here will result in the commitment of Council and partners staff time to developing projects. The actions will also require investment from a variety of sources including the Harbour Authority and the Council to deliver. These cannot be assessed at this point.

A5 What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?

A5.1 There will be no negative impacts for equalities and crime & disorder as a result of this report being taken forward. The project is expected to contribute to the growth of businesses and increasing demand for employment which in turn will have a positive impact on equalities in line with other Council and TDA activities to support businesses and people gaining employment

A6 Consultation and Customer Focus

A6.1 The development of this action plan was undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders within the maritime community including:

- Astra Zeneca
- Babbacombe Corinthians Sailing Club
- Blue Sea Food
- British Marine Federation
- Brixham Trawler Agents
- Brixham Yacht Club
- Devon Maritime Forum
- English Riviera Tourism Company
- International Sailing School
- Living Coasts

- Marina Developments Ltd
- Marine & Towing Services
- RegenSW
- Royal Navy
- Royal Torbay Yacht Club
- Sea Food Kitchen
- South Devon College
- South Devon Marine
- Tor Bay Harbour Committee
- Tor Bay Harbour Master
- Torbay Business Forum
- Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust
- Torbay Sports Council
- Torbay Town Centres Company
- Wreck the World

A7 Are there any implications for other Business Units?

A7.1 Implications on other business units will need to be assessed on an action by action basis. It is likely that there will be an impact on the Harbour Authority, Resident & Visitor Services and potentially activities directly relating to waterside development could impact on the function of emergency planning.

Sanctioning increased activity on, in or near the water could potentially lead to an impact on legal services in terms of litigation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Marine Economy Action Plan

Documents available in members' rooms

None

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Torbay Economic Strategy