



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

**to
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
26 SEPTEMBER 2024**

MOTION REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE FROM THE COUNCIL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information to inform Members considerations of the Motion referred to the Strategy and Resources Committee by the Council at its meeting on 12 September 2024.

2. MEMBER MOTION

- 2.1 In accordance with Procedure Rule 4, the following Motion was proposed by Councillor K M H Lagan and seconded by Councillor Mrs J C Stilts.

“That the council makes budget provision in the 2024/2025 budget setting process and undertakes dredging works / mud cutting / bucket dredging from the area from the visitors berth at Maldon Quay and along to the end of the area used by the Barge Trust. This is so as to secure safe access to the quay by Maldon’s historic Barge fleet, support visiting barges and other types of vessels to the town, and secure safe moorings of the barge fleet at Maldon. That the council further provides a sufficient sum each year that accrues that is ring fenced for mud removal every 5 years to ensure that the access to the Quay is safely maintained at all times and funding is provided. Work to be carried out in liaison with all quay users and stakeholders”

3. OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE MOTION

- (i) That the Committee confirms support for the principle of the Motion “to secure safe access to the quay by Maldon’s historic Barge fleet, support visiting barges and other types of vessels to the town, and secure safe moorings of the barge fleet at Maldon”;
- (ii) That a time limited Member Task and Finish Working Group is convened;
- (iii) That the Committee appoints six Members of the Strategy and Resources Committee to that Working Group, reporting back to the Committee by 23 January 2025.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council currently provides alongside berths for ‘Fully Rigged Thames Sailing Barges’ as previously agreed by Committee. These are a mixture of Commercially operated vessels, those which are operated and have Charitable Trust status, one

which is privately owned and a static Thames Lighter which is owned by a charity and does not qualify as a fully rigged sailing barge but has Committee approval to remain. There is also a visitor pontoon for visiting vessels.

- 4.2 There has been no significant dredging work in the main areas occupied by the Barges since around 2000.
- 4.3 The Council previously undertook a limited dredge in 2016 when extensive works were undertaken to pile the front of the Quay, but this work did not extend to those berths further out from the edge of the Quay. A further project to remove silt from the visitor berths was undertaken in 2019. Since then the silt has built up again, and without some intervention the current issues will only get worse and will make it increasingly challenging for both the Barges and other vessels, particularly smaller vessels.

5. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Officers fully support the principle of having a sustainable solution to managing the build-up of silt around Hythe Quay.
- 5.2 The setting up of a time limited Member Task and Finish Working Group will enable a full and considered approach to delivering a project to deal with the build-up of silt.
- 5.3 A clear Terms of Reference will be agreed at the inaugural meeting of the Working Group.
- 5.4 The Member Task and Finish Working Group will meet regularly with the aim to report back to the Strategy and Resources Committee by 23 January 2025.

6. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 – 2027

6.1 Supporting our communities

- 6.1.1 Delivering a solution to managing the issues caused by silting would specifically support both the users of the mooring at Hythe Quay, but also the benefits to the district from the impacts of Tourism which is supported by the Historic Barges based at Hythe Quay.
- 6.1.2 The establishing of a Member Working Group will ensure that engagement with stakeholders is considered and managed.

6.2 Smarter finances

- 6.2.1 The Working Group will ensure that the proposals recommended to the Strategy and Resources Committee deliver Value for Money.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None specifically, however having a solution will manage the issues caused by silting will benefit all users of the river, including visiting vessels and existing Barges moored at Hythe Quay.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.

- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – There are a number of potential risks, including Health and Safety. The formation of a Member Task and Finish Working Group will enable all risks associated.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The cost of the initial project could be significant and could be in the region of £100,000, including cost of carrying out the work, licences and project resource, plus additional costs for ongoing maintenance.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Project resource would be required.

Background Papers: None.

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