

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Wednesday, 14 November 2018 - 2.00 pm

PRESENT Councillor A Eastman (Chair)
Councillors P Pennington, T Johns, N Laws, C Simmons and
R Boughton

Phillip Topham

Councillor P Hackett

ALSO PRESENT S Kearney - Planning & Economy Manager
M Richards - Democratic Services Officer
J Williams - Environmental Health & Community Safety
Manager

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Boundy, Boyle and Parker.

43. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr Topham and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 4, Abstentions 3)

Matters Arising

MINUTE 40 - PLAY AREA STRATEGY SCOPING

Members discussed the report and the Task & Finish Group meeting which had taken place. It was felt it would be useful for all Councillors to have a spreadsheet detailing all of the play areas in their ward.

The Planning & Economy Manager explained that there were plans to upload an interactive map on to the website.

MUNUTE 41 - CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

There was currently no update on Route 39. To be brought forward.

44. ACTION LIST

The action list was reviewed.

45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

46. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

47. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

48. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

There were no matters brought forward.

49. PUBLIC HEALTH

Tracey Polak, Assistant Director/Consultant of Public Health, Devon County Council thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak. She referred to the letter which TDC's former Senior Solicitor had written to Dr T Burke of the CCG raising concerns over the reduction of life expectancy in Torridge and what was being done from the health care perspective.

Firstly, Members were reassured that the statistics relating to life expectancy were not that significant as Public Health England had produced figures illustrating that health services impacted only 10% on life expectancy, the bigger influences being life style choices and wider determinants, such as employment, housing and education. However, European countries did fare better. Trends in life style choices were changing and people were becoming more active. The impact of this change would not be seen for 30 years.

An important factor in the consideration of life expectancy was quality of life: The quality of healthy life expectancy had increased but not at the same rate as life expectancy, so more years were being spent in poor health.

Looking at Devon and Torridge the areas raising alarm included self harm, suicide, hospital admissions for alcohol, diabetes and children seriously injured on the roads.

One Northern Devon was working with Torbay on a suicide prevention strategy, with a particular focus on self harm, as well as other initiatives such as training first responders, the “Its Safe to Talk” Campaign and the work to make the Taw Bridge less accessible to those with suicidal thoughts. The County now had a new coroner with whom DCC had a much closer relationship.

A strategy to combat road accidents was being considered.

Members discussed stress, housing, fuel poverty and poverty.

The Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager advised that a lot of work in these areas was being done through the Community Safety Partnership. Within northern Devon, Torrington had the highest longevity of life; the more poignant issues in Torrington were health and equality. Health and poverty and how better to work with local communities was something the new locality working project might consider.

With regard to obesity, it was hoped that by targeting parents, children would be encouraged to perceive a healthier lifestyle as the norm. There was concern that the disappearance of the Active Mums initiative had left a gap in Torrington – Tracey will speak to Active Devon to see what their plans for Torrington might be.

50. NORTH DEVON MARKETING BUREAU

Nick White shared some background relating to his experience in the tourism industry and his role within the North Devon Marketing Bureau.

Using information from the Visit Britain Economic Impact Study he illustrated national and local tourism trends and offered comparisons with other South West Counties. Details were given of the milestones achieved by the North Devon Marketing Bureau during 2017-2018 and the links with Visit Devon, particularly in respect of events and websites. A Tourism Strategy had been written.

Whilst acknowledging the benefits tourism can bring – money, health and wellbeing – the need for North Devon and Torrington to work together and for DCC to be involved was noted. The new business model and TBIDs were explained. It was possible that 100% funding could be secured (approximately £120,000) through a TBID. Nick told Members that additional documents had been submitted to TDC, which will be circulated.

The recommendation was that a task & finish group be set up to work with the North Devon Marketing Bureau.

The Chair thanked Nick for his presentation.

Members debated various aspects of tourism and asked questions of Nick.#

The Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing requested that the Lead Member update be brought forward. This was agreed by the Chair.

51. HEALTH, WELLBEING & SOCIAL CARE (STANDING ITEM)

The report of the Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing was received and there were no questions arising.

The Vice Chair reminded the Committee of the invitation to attend North Devon's Scrutiny meeting on health and wellbeing on 15 November.

The Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing left the meeting.

52. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LA O&S COMMITTEES

The Planning & Economy Manager introduced the report of the Strategic Manager (Resources) and advised that the Joint Task & Finish Group had met to review the findings of the Government's report on the Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees, although no External Overview & Scrutiny Committees had been able to attend.

The group had identified 6 main areas that were considered important and relevant for discussion and evaluation.

The Task and Finish Group felt that the way both the scrutiny committees operated was very effective and in line with the principles of how they should function.

The report was noted.

53. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was reviewed.

The Planning & Economy Manager explained that the LEP had a new Chief Executive, David Ralph, who had in fact visited Torridge to meet with the Leader and the Head of Paid Service. It would be difficult to get him to attend Committee as he was very busy. However, the Planning & Economy Manager would be happy to report back to Committee regularly on the LEP.

Cleanliness at facilities managed by 1610 Leisure Services was raised. The Planning & Economy Manager responded that complaints had been far fewer.

The Planning & Economy Manager will liaise with the Lead Member for the Economy and with North Devon Council about the North Devon Marketing Bureau before scheduling a return visit.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 4.19 pm.

Chair:

Date: