

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILEXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETINGTown Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HSWednesday, 10 April 2019 - 6.00 pm

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

Phillip Topham

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

I Blythe - 1610
Hayes - 1610

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin
Councillor Whittaker

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Boyle and Councillor Parker.

79. MINUTES

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 5, Abstentions 3)

Matters Arising

In response to a question about Bideford Bay Chamber of Commerce the Planning and Economy Manager explained that there had been a recent change in presidency and the new president had not been in a position to take up the invitation.

80. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

81. ACTION LIST

The action list was reviewed and updated. It was noted that:

74 b) – Signage: Car Parks - Great Torrington

A review of signage had been conducted and action had been taken to improve effectiveness. Further signage will be required once the electric car charging point is installed.

74 – Great Torrington Community Trust

The item had been added to the Forward Plan. Mr Topham told the Committee that a reorganisation was in progress but he would happily provide an update in the future.

82. 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.

83. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

85. 1610

The Chair welcomed Ian Blythe and Ricky Hayes of 1610.

Mr Blythe introduced Ricky Hayes, Contract Lead for Torridge District Council who is also responsible for swim and sports development for 1610.

Mr Blythe thanked the Chair for the opportunity to update the Committee. He told the Committee that the lines of communication with TDC had much improved which meant issues were being dealt with as they came in.

An informative presentation was delivered, the highlights of which are detailed below:

- The highest ever levels of membership had been recorded, despite strong competition.

- Swimming lessons had reached their highest levels, which, in turn, had led to more interest in general swimming sessions.
- Fitness and swimming sessions still represented the major part of the business, however, exercise referral schemes (prescriptive memberships) now constituted 11% of membership and this in itself was a success story as this captured people who would not normally visit a sports facility.
- Further focus needed to be concentrated around special help programmes such as Small Steps and working with mental health.
- There is close collaboration with local schools.
- Although income figures were down, this reflected a decision to focus more on quality. Some programmes had been removed and savings had been made.
- There had been a change to the pre-planned maintenance contract, resulting in a reduction in cost but an improvement in services.
- The national living wage and the national minimum wage had put tremendous pressure on 1610 and staffing teams had reduced due mainly to natural wastage.

Mr Blythe gave details about the equipment at the facilities both in terms of enhancement and challenge; swimming promotions and the “Let’s Move” scheme which had been operating very successfully.

Members spoke about their personal experiences and the complaints they had received. Mr Blythe and Mr Hayes acknowledged the issues raised and spoke about personnel procedures, ongoing staff training and measures implemented to ensure that the expected levels of service are achieved and standards are improved. Furthermore, it was important that members of the public challenge staff about concerns (Team Leaders wear black t-shirts) and any complaints should always be reported as they occur.

Requests were made for more exciting inflatables at Torrington Pool and specialist lane dividers for Northam Pool.

An update was given on the filters at Torrington Pool – it was hoped they would be fixed on Friday 26 April.

The company’s finances were discussed and Members were told about the huge impact the Government’s pension scheme had placed on the 2017 financial results – 1610 had since exited the Government pension scheme. Reassurance was given that the issue had been dealt with and the updated balance sheet presented a healthy position. Furthermore, as a not for profit trust, a significant amount of money was held in the reserves.

The Chair thanked Mr Blythe and Mr Hayes.

Councillor Pennington recommended that 1610 be reviewed biannually. The Planning and Economy Manager confirmed that a further review will be carried out in 6 months.

Mr Blythe, Mr Hayes, Councillor Cottle-Hunkin and Councillor Whittaker left the meeting.

86. REPORT FROM OFFICER GROUP RESEARCHING TBID

The Planning & Economy Manager confirmed that the next step will be to set up a Member Task & Finish group to consider the findings of the officer Task & Finish Group which had carried out research with Nick White. Items for consideration included the proposals relating to a levy on tourism related businesses and preparation for TBID. It would also need to be agreed whether Nick White should sit on the Task & Finish Group.

The Planning & Economy Manager recapped on the role of North Devon+ and it was noted that collaboration on marketing with North Devon Council should be sought, initially at officer level. Members discussed the assets of Torridge.

87. PLAY AREAS - OUTCOME OF CALL-IN BY INTERNAL O&S

After a comprehensive discussion by the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee a recommendation had been made that the recommendation of the Council's Community and Resources Committee (14th January 2019) be rejected and that an amount of up to £20,000 be provided from the Council's Project Reserves to enable the commission of consultants to prepare a play space strategy for Torridge because that will provide benefits for Torridge that might eventually make more savings than the "up to £20,000".

This will be considered by the Community & Resources Committee at its next meeting on 23 April.

In the meantime a sum of £10,646 had been received from the Government towards the provision of play areas.

88. ANNUAL REPORT

The draft annual report was circulated and Members were advised that once finalised it would be published on the website and included in the Members' Bulletin.

The following recommendations were made:

- That the outcomes of the scrutiny should also be included in the report.
- The organisations should be grouped by type of service, rather than in chronological order of attendance.
- To include a paragraph on the joint meeting in November with North Devon on the CCG.

A discussion on 1610 took place and it was noted that Members were still not happy with their performance. The Planning & Economy Manager advised that the next stage of the contract review would involve Members of the Community & Resources Committee.

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

The Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager conveyed apologies for absence from the Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing. The Lead Member's update was circulated and further updates provided by the Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager as follows:

- The homeless man in Bideford had now left the area. Housing Options had engaged with him but he had chosen not to take up their offer.
- A meeting of Torrington 100 is due to take place in the next couple of weeks. We are also exploring the development of the Torrington 100 principles with Holsworthy Town Council as well as with Bideford Bay Health Services. A new contract is coming into place on 1 April whereby every GP practice has to have a social prescribing element. Social prescribing has the support of One Northern Devon.
- A new programme, Connecting Actively to Nature (CAN), will be launched at the beginning of May in conjunction with Active Devon. The programme, aimed at the over 55s, will help people to discover the combined benefits of a more active lifestyle with the psychological benefits that being outdoors in nature brings.

90. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

Recommendations for the Forward Plan:

- TTVS
- CAB
- 1610 biannually
- Great Torrington Community Trust
- Agriculture – NFU and support organisations
- Fisheries

The Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager advised that the Green Deal scheme no longer exists but she would be happy to come back to talk on fuel poverty.

91. CLOSING COMMENTS

The Vice Chair thanked the Chair for his chairmanship.

The Chair thanked Committee Members and support officers and expressed his best wishes to all for the forthcoming elections.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.02 pm.

Chair:

Date:

