

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILCOMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETINGTown Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HSTuesday, 23 April 2019 - 10.00 am

PRESENT Councillor D Hurley (Chair)  
Councillors A Dart, P Hackett, R Hicks, J Himan, S Inch, R Lock,  
D McGeough, J Whittaker and R Wiseman

ALSO PRESENT S Dorey - Senior Solicitor  
S Hearse - Strategic Manager (Resources)  
S Kearney - Planning & Economy Manager  
S Toon - Customer Support Manager  
M Richards - Democratic Services Officer  
A Redwood - Property and Procurement Manager  
C Norman - Solicitor  
J Williams - Environmental Health & Community Safety  
Manager

Councillor James  
Councillor Laws

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

107. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Head of Paid Service.

108. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 4 MARCH 2019

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Lock and -

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For – 9, Abstentions 1)

109. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

110. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made when the specific agenda items to which they related were under discussion.

112. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker, seconded by Councillor Hackett and –

Resolved: That the Agenda as circulated be agreed.

(Vote: For - unanimous)

113. URGENT MATTERS OF INFORMATION TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR AND THE COMMITTEE

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

114. ADOPTION OF AN UPDATED DEVON WIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE

The report, presented by the Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager, gave details of the revisions since the policy was adopted in June 2018 and included new measures piloted by Mid Devon District Council and Exeter City Council. It was noted that means testing for stair lifts had been removed and hospital based or Social Services Occupational Therapists could now make referrals.

At the time of writing the report the housing assistance spend figures had not been available but the Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager was now able to confirm that in 2018/2019 spend had been £606,000, representing an increase of 80% on the previous year. However, there had been an underspend of £350,000 on last year's allocation.

Councillor Whittaker congratulated the Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager and her team on the amazing work there were doing.

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker, seconded by Councillor Hackett and -

Resolved:

That the revised Housing Assistance Policy attached as Appendix 1 in the report as Appendix 1 be approved for Torridge District Council.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

115. HOUSEHOLD WASTE DUTY OF CARE - SETTING OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICE LEVELS

The Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager presented the report and

sought the Committee's approval of the proposed levels of fixed penalty and discount for early payment.

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Lock and -

Resolved:

That the provisions as detailed in the report be noted, and the level of fixed penalty for this offence, together with the discount for early payment as set out in the report, be approved.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

116. BIDEFORD PORT SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Harbour Master informed the Committee that, following a review of port safety and in compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code, a Port Safety Management System and a Marine Safety Plan had been created. Current risk assessments were to be reviewed over the coming months. The report served to update Members on the progress achieved to date and to seek Committee approval to publish the Port Management System on the website. The Head of Paid Service would then write to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, confirming TDC's compliance with legislation.

During the ensuing discussions, an issue of safety was raised. A motorist had been seen entering the parking area whilst the crane was loading/unloading despite fencing and signage. The Harbour Master said he would review the risk.

Commercial performance, charges, challenges and the statutory requirement to have an open port were discussed.

It was proposed by Councillor McGeough, seconded by Councillor Lock and -

Resolved:

That the publication of the Port of Bideford Safety Management System be approved, and the Harbour Master be instructed to publish such on the Harbour website.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

117. ADOPTION OF THE NORTH DEVON COAST AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019 -2024

The Planning & Economy Manager distributed the North Devon Coast AONB Management Plan. He explained that the adoption of the plan had been the subject of an urgency procedure as all partners had wanted to be signed up for delivery commencing April 2019.

The view was aired that there had been no opportunity to discuss the plan,

particularly in relation to agriculture. The Planning & Economy Manager explained that the Management Plan was a publication which had been prepared in conjunction with outside bodies and discussions had taken place at the highest levels. The Plan had been adopted by the partner bodies.

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker, seconded by Councillor Lock and –

Resolved:

That the adoption under Urgency Procedure of the North Devon Coast AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 be noted.

(Vote: For 5, Against 2, Abstentions 2)

118. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL GRANT FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCAL PROJECTS

The Planning & Economy Manager reported on the new schemes being introduced by Devon County Council. He also spoke about the 2018/19 grant underspends - £4,767.60 from the Communities Together Fund and £6,463.38 from the Councillor Grant fund. Both amounts would need to be reallocated.

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker, seconded by Councillor S Inch and -

Resolved:

1. That the changes to DCC grant funding and the establishment of their Doing What Matters and Making the Connection Funds, be noted
2. That the Communities Together and Councillor Community Grant underspend from year 18/19 totalling £11,230.98 be rolled forward into the 19/20 Community Grants Fund.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

119. TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAY STRATEGY

The Planning & Economy Manager recapped on the history of the debate relating to this topic and explained that the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee had felt that the benefit and savings achievable by having a play strategy in place would be greater than the projected consultancy fee.

There was a view that the strategy should be drawn up in house, thus saving on consultant fees and this was discussed at length. The Strategic Manager (Resources) drew attention to the additional £10,646 funding granted by the MHCLG since the last debate on the topic.

The Vice Chair of the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee told the meeting that the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee had carefully considered the whole package – both the recommendations and the officers' reports. He reminded

Members of the value of having a separate committee to scrutinise issues such as this.

It was proposed by Councillor Lock, seconded by Councillor S Inch and -

Resolved:

That an amount of up to £20,000 (inclusive of the sum of £10,646 received from the MHCLG for the furtherance of play initiatives) be provided from the Council's Project Reserves to enable the commissioning 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".

(Vote: For 6, Against 4)

120. FEES & CHARGES - LEASE AGREEMENTS (RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

The Strategic Manager (Resources) reported on the recommendations made by the Internal Overview & Scrutiny following the quarterly business review. The Senior Solicitor had highlighted some areas where no charges were raised and these had been considered during the review.

During the discussion, concerns were raised about the amount of services for which TDC does levy a charge.

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Hurley and -

Resolved:

That the new fees for lease arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 in the report be approved.

(Vote: For 6, Against 4)

121. TRANSFORMING TORRIDGE PROGRAMME

An update had been provided at the Full Council meeting held on 8 April and there was nothing further to report.

122. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Whittaker and –

Resolved:

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 and Paragraph 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

123. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

124. PROPERTY PURCHASE (HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION)

Following Full Council's recommendation on 8 April to increase the Capital Programme by £1m for the provision of homeless accommodation, the Housing and Property Teams had considered a range of options to mitigate the increased demand for homeless services. Members discussed the options, having particular regard for the financial and legislative implications but also considering the impact on local residents as well as the homeless individuals.

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker, second by Councillor Hackett and -

Resolved:

That the recommendation as set out in the report be authorised.

(Vote: For 8, Against 1, Abstentions 1)

125. APPLICATION FOR HARDSHIP RELIEF

The meeting was informed that a panel of Members had considered an application on 19 March. An earlier application had been made in 2017 which had been approved. However, since then there had been no indication of any change in the foreseeable future. The panel had been minded to reject the application.

It was proposed by Councillor McGeough, seconded by Councillor Whittaker and –

Resolved:

That the application for Hardship relief be refused

(Vote: For – unanimous)

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker and seconded by Councillor McGeough –

That:

The press and public be readmitted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

126. CLOSING REMARKS

Thanks were extended to Councillor Whittaker for the excellent job she had done as Leader of the Council over the past 4 years.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.59 am.

Chair:

Date: