

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Wednesday, 28 March 2018 - 6.00 pm

PRESENT Councillor M Langmead (Chair)
Councillors P Pennington, S Inch, T Johns, N Laws and
C Simmons

Mr K Bines - Non-elected Member

ALSO PRESENT J Hollis - Senior Solicitor
M Richards - Democratic Services Officer

Mr Topham (term of expired) attended the meeting as a member
of the public.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM THE MEETING

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Mason, Councillors Boyle, Eastman
and Parker.

71. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Simon Inch and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2018 be agreed and signed as
a correct record.

(Vote: For 5, Abstentions 2)

72. ACTION LIST

Minute 55 - External Grants Task & Finish Group

The Senior Solicitor advised that the External Grants Task & Finish Group would be
set up following the AGM.

Minute 66 - Community transport for Bideford and Torrington

The Chair confirmed that he had spoken to Rachel Raper at Intagr8 and had been

advised that Intagr8 did have spare capacity and were indeed looking to purchase a third minibus.

Minute 66 (a) - Community transport for Bideford and Torrington

A communication from Councillor James profiling Holsworthy Rural Community Transport was read out and it was noted that the initiative was born out of the foot and mouth epidemic in 2001 whereby market and coastal towns were encouraged to bid for funding to set up schemes. A variety of schemes were initiated in Holsworthy including Holsworthy Rural Community Transport which ultimately were all funded through lottery and local funding - no Government grants were received.

73. 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.

74. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

1610 Leisure Services' proposal to introduce cashless payments had been raised at Internal Overview & Scrutiny by Councillor Inch and a letter had been received by the Chair of External Overview & Scrutiny from Councillor Brown on the subject. Added to this, there was evidence that the public were not satisfied with the leisure services provided and the facilities managed by 1610.

The Senior Solicitor advised that he was liaising with the Commercial & Leisure Services Manager with a view to inviting a representative from 1610 to the next meeting to discuss the issues raised. Internal Overview & Scrutiny would also be invited to attend.

A debate followed and it was agreed that the matter needed to be addressed with more urgency. The Senior Solicitor agreed that he would try to bring forward the joint meeting but the Commercial & Leisure Services Manager was off for 2 weeks. The Chair will notify the Chair of Internal Overview & Scrutiny of the Committee's discussions and suggestion to have an earlier meeting.

The Committee agreed that 1610 should be added to the Forward Plan for scrutiny later in the year.

76. BIDEFORD BIKE CLUB

The Chair welcomed 6 representatives from the Bideford Bike Show.

Caroline Williams thanked the Chair on behalf of the Bideford Bike Show for the opportunity to address the Committee and for the grant received. It was noted that

the Bideford Bike Show was a Committee who organised events and was not a club.

A slide presentation was given which explained how the Bike Show had started in 2014, attracting many more bikes than anticipated, and was continuing to grow in popularity, so much so, that it was now looking to expand further along the quay. In addition to the Bike Show, other fund raising events were staged and sponsorship also came from local businesses. The events raised money for local and national charities and to date £18,065.84 had been donated from the proceeds.

The Chair thanked Caroline for the very positive presentation and invited Members to comment and raise any questions. Additional information was provided as follows:

- Committee Members organised the Bike Show on a voluntary basis and did not receive any remuneration therefor.
- Trade stalls paid for their pitch.
- Registered charities could take a stand free of charge, although a 2nd pitch was chargeable.
- Bikes attending on the day of the show paid £3 per bike.
- It was almost impossible to count how many people attended the Bike Show but the estimated number of spectators was between 2500 and 3000.

Councillor Laws suggested that Full Council be asked to reconsider its position in respect of the Bike Show being charged for the use of parking spaces for the event. The Bike Show representatives were encouraged to quantify the numbers drawn in to Bideford by the Show.

The Bike Show Committee was urged to approach the Devon County Council again, via Councillor T Inch or Councillor L Hellyer, to see whether it would be possible to close the road for the show without incurring a cost.

Councillors acknowledged the valuable contribution to the local economy and praised the efforts of the Bike Show Committee.

77. GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LA SCRUTINY

The Senior Solicitor advised that Internal Overview & Scrutiny had already looked at this item and had suggested a Task & Finish Group with Overview & Scrutiny Committee be set up. Internal Overview & Scrutiny had appointed the Chair, Vice Chair and one further delegate from the Committee.

The Chair asked that the Committee agree to the nomination of the Chair and Vice Chair to the Task & Finish Group and sought a further delegate.

It was proposed by Councillor Laws and seconded by Councillor S Inch –

That:

The Chair, Vice Chair and Mr Bines be appointed to the Task & Finish Group.

78. ANNUAL REPORT

The following amendments and omissions were raised:

The Role of External Overview & Scrutiny

Change paragraph 3 from:

The External Overview & Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the performance of external public sector bodies operating within Torridge.

To:

The External Overview & Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the performance of selected external bodies and companies serving the community within Torridge.

A Look back at 2017/2018

Omission of Mr Topham - departing Committee Members.*

Some of the voices we have heard in 2017/18

Citizens Advice – to include name of Chief Executive, Vicky Rowe.

* The Committee briefly discussed Mr Topham's input and acknowledged the contribution he had made.

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

The Lead Member for Health & Well Being reported that he had attended a meeting at the Police Headquarters at Middlemoor, Exeter. The meeting was to consider the Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines, otherwise known as Project Genesis.

Discussions had covered early intervention, co-location, data sharing and a possible re-launch/rebranding of Neighbourhood Watch and these had been positive. However, the message regarding staffing had been less positive: There will be a transition to 150 PCSOs by 2020/21 which will primarily be achieved by natural wastage. The Lead Member had found this particularly disconcerting as PCSOs were the front line in rural communities, a point he had made on various occasions to the P&CC's office and to the Police & Crime Commissioner, herself, and he had felt that the message had found empathy. The reduction from 360 PCSOs was very disappointing. There were positives - an additional 100 officers, the investment in 10 specialist Problem Solvers, the investment in up to 50 Police Staff Investigators. Nonetheless the reduction from 360 PCSOs was a concern.

The Lead Member was looking to raise £5,000 funding for EPERB LIFEJACKETS. To date he had secured £1500, and a further £1500 had been pledged. He would be seeking to gain some positive press publicity for this shortly and would welcome any further monies. Unfortunately North Devon District Council had said that it was not on their list of priorities at the current time.

The Committee discussed the information on policing.

It was proposed by Councillor Pennington, seconded by Councillor Langmead and –

Resolved:

That:

A letter be written to the Police & Crime Commissioner stating that Torridge District Council was extremely concerned at the proposal to reduce the numbers of PCSOs in rural areas whilst at the same time, crime figures were increasing.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

In view of the latest figures on life expectancy, highlighting reduced life expectancy in Torridge, Councillor Pennington proposed drafting a letter to the CCG asking how they planned to address this.

The Committee voted unanimously in favour.

80. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

Mr Bines declared an interest as he is a Member of the Clarity Trust.

The Forward Plan was reviewed and updated.

The business themed topics were moved to August to allow for a 2.00pm start as multiple agencies were to be invited and may result in a long meeting.

Flooding and surface water drainage was raised as a critical issue and was discussed in more detail, with particular reference to the Environment Agency's objections to some planning applications on the grounds of flood water levels. The Committee felt it important to have the EA present in conjunction with DCC's Flood Risk Team.

Councillor Langmead declared an interest as he sits on the Plans Committee.

Under the heading of Health & Well Being it was agreed that the CCG, Dr John Womersley, be invited back for an update and that a representative from the North Devon Health Care Trust be asked to attend to provide an update following the resignation of Alison Diamond.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.28 pm

Chair:

Date: