

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Wednesday, 22 August 2018 - 2.00 pm

PRESENT                      Councillor A Eastman (Chair)  
Councillors P Pennington, B Boundy, P Christie (substitute for  
C Simmons), S Inch, T Johns, N Laws and P Hackett

Phillip Topham              Non Elected Member

ALSO PRESENT              J Hollis                      - Senior Solicitor  
M Hutchings                - Devon County Council  
S Dart                         - Environment Agency  
S Cawsey                     - Democratic Services Officer

ND Councillors J Mathews, W White, J Patrinos, E Ley  
and D Worden

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillors from ND Council, Mr M Hutchings, Devon County Council and Mr S Dart, Environment Agency.

23.            APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Boyle, Councillor Simmons and Councillor Spear (North Devon Council)

24.            MINUTES

It was proposed by, seconded by and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2018 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 5, Abstentions 3)

25.            PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public contributions.

26.            ACTION LIST

The Senior Solicitor advised that he had spoken to Miss Tracey Polak who had agreed to give a presentation at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Police had also agreed to give a verbal presentation at a meeting of the Committee.

Letter to Mr Keif Bines still to be sent.

27. 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.

28. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

30. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Mr Martin Hutchings, Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, Devon County Council, gave a powerpoint presentation on "Flood and Coastal Risk Management".

The presentation can be viewed on the hyperlink below.

[T:\Democratic\\_Services\03 O&S External\2018 - 2019\03 - 22 August 2018\Presentation for Torridge Scrutiny - August 2018.pptx](T:\Democratic_Services\03 O&S External\2018 - 2019\03 - 22 August 2018\Presentation for Torridge Scrutiny - August 2018.pptx)

The following key points were raised during the discussion:

- Devon Community Resilience Forum – through the Forum Parish Councils are offered the opportunity to receive £200 to help towards the preparation of an Action Plan, with an additional two payments to ensure the Plan works.
- Grant funding –Devon Together website contains information re Emergency Grants.
- Coastal Special Interest Group (SIG) – details of the advantages of becoming a member of the Group was given. It was confirmed that TDC had joined the Group.
- Watercourses and Land Drainage Consents
- Climate change prediction – rainfall to be more intense - 40% more rainfall over next 100 years.
- Members gave examples of areas of concern within Torridge, in particular Northam Burrows.

- The granting of Planning applications and the flood risks involved.

A number of questions and issues were raised and addressed by Mr Martin Hutchings.

A verbal presentation on Flood Risk Management was given by Mr Simon Dart, Flood Risk Engineer, Environment Agency.

As a successful bidder, the Environment Agency were piloting a programme "Natural Flood Management". This involved working on a number of projects including Kenwith Dam in Bideford. The Agency were looking to raise Kenwith by about one meter. There is a sewer that runs across the dam, and discussions are being held with South West Water. Surface water drainage – the Agency are asking developers to carry out this work to a high standard to ensure water does not run into the dam.

Following a question by Councillor Laws, Mr Simon Dart detailed the work previously carried out in Bideford to ensure the dam did not overflow. He confirmed that the design by the Agency is designed to cope with future development within the area. The Agency is working with the Friends of Kenwith Valley with regard to future works proposed to the dam, including the cutting down of trees. It was confirmed that for each tree cut down a further five would be planted. Details of the proposed works to the dam was given. They are also working with Devon Wildlife Trust, AONB and Devon County Council on this matter.

The presentation also included information with regard to the following:

- Coastal erosion – currently working in a Defra Group to come up with a better strategy for the area
- Shoreline Plan to start later in the year. TDC are the coastal Authority who are working with the Environment Agency re corrosion problems
- Northam Burrows - landfill is the responsibility of Devon County Council. Members discussed the need for a 15 year Plan to be in place for the Burrows and Pebble Ridge.
- Brunswick Wharf - Environment Agency working with the Authority to see if a joint scheme can be arranged. Environment Agency to also work with site owner. The Environment Agency need to have an idea on costs and structural issues and also surface water issues. Concerns were also raised re silting of the river. Harbour Master had advised the river can be dredged. The Environment Agency can only dredge if there is justification to do so.
- Councillor Christie referred to the comments by Mr Simon Dart that there may be money available for the Wharf wall. He asked that the Procurement & Property Manager make further enquiries into this.

- Climate change – Environment Agency looking at a 25 year plan and the effects of climate change

Any questions Members may have should be emailed to Democratic Services or Mr Simon Dart.

His mail address is: [simon.dart@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:simon.dart@environment-agency.gov.uk)

The Chair thanked both Mr Martin Hutchings and Mr Simon Dart for attending and giving informative presentations.

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

Resolved :

That a letter be sent asking for further information with regard to funding re Brunswick Wharf wall.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

Councillor Christie referred to the dredging of the river and suggested that tests are carried out on what is dredged to see if it could be sold.

### 31. HEALTH, WELLBEING & SOCIAL CARE (STANDING ITEM)

The Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing updated the Committee as follows:

“The Police and Crime panel met on Friday 10th August in Plymouth to discuss the Business Case for the proposed merger of the Devon and Somerset Constabulary with the Dorset Constabulary.

The Committee had been sent an “Exploration of merger presentation” which was scant on any meaningful detail. The committee believed that they were meeting to see the business case, which is due to be presented to the Alliance Convergence Board in September before being submitted to the Home Office on 12th October, prior to a “Minded to” decision being made by the Home Secretary in December 2018. Deadlines are necessarily tight as the whole process has to be completed before the election of a single Police and Crime Commissioner in 2020.

Currently all is known are some bare facts with no detail whatsoever. The combined area will operate under a single Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable. The savings will allow for an “aspiration for 430 new officers or staff” and “reinvest in areas such as improved technology.” Significantly the £18 differential in precept must be aligned although at this late stage it is not known how - so how can a detailed business case with projected savings be presented?

The committee had a robust exchange with the Chief Constable as they felt that the Police and Crime Panel was in effect toothless as it was not permitted to scrutinise the proposal in the necessary detail.

The resolution passed (in brief) was to write to the Home Secretary to express reservations about the proposed merger on the basis of the currently available information.

The Holsworthy Community Involvement Group (HCIG) continues to meet regularly, usually on a fortnightly basis, and held its last meeting on Tuesday 7th August at the White Hart, Holsworthy rather than the usual venue of the Market Hall.

At the previous meeting the Vice Chairman tasked me to slim down the District Councillor representation on the group to meet the terms of reference. The previous stakeholder group had been set up by Councillors Watson, James and myself, had gained invaluable knowledge of this complex issue and they represented the wider rural area. The HCIG agreed to retain Councillor James due to his various roles within Holsworthy (Youth Club, Rural Transport etc). Unfortunately the group could not be persuaded to retain Councillor Watson.

The group were updated by the CCG as to the current position. Holsworthy Medical Centre do not have doctor capacity to cover the beds as they are also covering Stratton Hospital (Bude); Blake House can only send a doctor to cover 4 beds in the lunch hour (which is not acceptable to the hospital) Beech House surgery and Hatherleigh surgeries have both recently closed adding to local doctor capacity issues. Derriford Hospital (Plymouth) are 20 doctors short and so the CCG are currently speaking to Devon Doc and the RD&E to see if they can assist with cover for the Holsworthy beds.

Without doctor cover secured the CCG will not move to the next stage of the implementation plan which is to advertise for nurses to staff the beds.

The previous staff are unwilling to leave their new role in the community and significantly they feel that patients are achieving better outcomes in their own homes. Barnstaple Hospital has a serious nursing shortage - and this is a national position - witness the recent closure of in patient beds in Portland for lack of staffing. 10.5 FTE nurses are required, so far 2-4 FTE are believed to be secured. However, the CCG feel that as the process is two months in to six month implementation plan "they are where they should be."

On a positive front a survey paid for by a donation of £1,500 by Holsworthy Hospital League of Friends is going to be sent out to all Holsworthy Rural residents late August to ascertain what care is required and to help Holsworthy Town Council reopen the beds. The questions range from "Do you Know a Carer?", "Where do you want to die?", "When did you last go to a hospital?", "What transport do you use?". This survey will be analysed by two apprentices from DCC.

I have also had productive meetings with Toby Davis and Sean Keneally to discussing policing issues. The CSP Road Safety Working Group is making progress in highlighting concerns about driver behaviour with several action days

where specific areas have been targeted - older drivers have been found to be more likely to speed and drive without a seatbelt. I have raised concerns about the lack of rural road policing with a perception that drivers can get away with drink driving and mobile phone use.

A grant application is in the process of being written by TDC to secure maximum 75% EU contribution for the EPERB Lifejackets.

The Devon and Torbay Suicide Alliance have, at this stage, not been able to secure funding from the CSP and this is an issue that I am working with Janet Williams to make their valuable work fit the funding criteria so that they are sustainable.

I have also attended a meeting together with Janet Williams to explore the potential of crowdfunding for local projects using the DCC platform, which can maximise the value of any TDC financial contributions and also test public support for a project".

Members discussed the above update in more detail, with Councillors expressing strong views on the shortage of Doctors and trained nurses.

Councillor Christie left the meeting.

## 32. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was reviewed. Changes and additions were as follows:

### Cycle 4

- CCG, North Devon Health Care Trust, SWAST – to remove from Forward Plan for 3 October meeting. Members to attend ND Council meeting on 15 November at 2pm (Health Authorities had been invited to the 15 November, and would therefore avoid duplication).  
Members to forward questions in advance to Democratic Services.

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Pennington that letters be written to the above bodies cancelling their attendance at the meeting on 3 October, and explaining the reasons why.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

In accordance with the Constitution it was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved: That in view of the fact 3 hours had elapsed since the meeting had commenced, that the meeting should continue.

(Vote For - Unanimous)

- Miss Tracey Polak, Public Health to be invited to attend the meeting on 3 October

- TIC's to invite to attend 14 November meeting. (Discussions to be held with the Planning and Economy Manager prior to invites being sent)
- Agriculture Business to be removed from Forward Plan for meeting on 14 November. Joint meeting to be held at ND Council January/February.

The meeting commenced at 14.00pm and closed at 17.05pm

Chair:

Date: