TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Wednesday, 31 May 2017 - 2.00 pm

PRESENT
Councillor M Langmead (Chair)
Councillors A Dart, T Johns, P Pennington, R Darch, K Carroll,
P Le Maistre and P Watson

Mr Topham
Mr Mason

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eastman, S Inch, Boyle,
Parker and from Internal Overview & Scrutiny, Councillor Simmons and Mr Lockwood.

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and asked Members to introduce
themselves.

2. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Johns and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March be agreed and signed as a
correct record.

(Vote: For 5, Abstentions 4)

Matters Arising

Councillor Dart apologised for omitting to submit apologies for the last meeting.

Invitation to Internal Overview & Scrutiny – The Chair advised that Members of the
Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been invited to the meeting to take
part in the Burton Art Gallery discussion. The decision, arising from the discussions
following the Non-Elected Member’s presentation at the last meeting, to set up a
joint meeting with Internal Overview & Scrutiny to share the Impact Evaluation, was an item for the Forward Plan.

Minute 73 – Draft Annual Report

Further to confirmation following the last meeting that TTVS had not attended an External Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting during 2016/2017, it was requested that TTVS be added to the Forward Plan.

3. ACTION LIST

Minute No.59 – Joint Meeting With North Devon

It was proposed by Councillor Langmead, seconded by Councillor Watson and resolved that an e-mail be sent to all Councillors asking for any questions prior to the meeting.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

Minute No. 61 – Tourism

The Senior Solicitor gave details of a possibility to have a stand alone portal for Tourism, similar to that managed by HR. Further discussions to be held with the Commercial & Leisure Manager.

Minute 73 – Annual Report

Outside bodies – It was noted that Holsworthy Rural Transport had asked to be invited to attend External Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings on an annual basis, in order to provide an update on what they are doing. They also expressed gratitude for the funding received from TDC.

A discussion took place on other community transport organisations; the role they play and the funding they receive.

4. 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.

5. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

The Chair reminded Members of their duty to attend Committee meetings. If Members were not able to attend and in order to prevent meetings being inquorate, they should submit their apologies and do their best to find a substitute.
7. **FIRE SERVICE**

It was noted that, on accepting the Committee’s invitation, the Group Commander had made it clear that he was very keen to attend but may have to pull out at the last minute due to operational commitments.

The Group Commander did not attend the meeting. A further invitation would be extended.

8. **BURTON ART GALLERY - 12 MONTH REVIEW**

In the absence of the Commercial & Leisure Services Manager, the Chair invited Mrs Judith Gentry, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Burton at Bideford to answer any questions.

The Senior Solicitor advised the Committee that the purpose of the discussion was to gain an insight into the progress being made rather than to scrutinise each line of the agreement, as the terms of the agreement had been set for 5 years and could not be changed.

Mrs Gentry provided answers to questions, giving the following information:

- There had been regular meetings between the Council’s Contact Officer and Charity’s Contact Officer. However, the Charity’s Contact Officer had left but Mrs Gentry now held meetings with the Council’s Contact Officer every 2 weeks or daily as required. Mrs Gentry confirmed that the Contact Officer role was part of the Manager’s job description and when a new Manager was recruited they would automatically assume this duty.
- The Charity was looking for opportunities to extend the reach to include other art forms.
- The proposed review at 3 years would enable the Charity to demonstrate the progress of its longer term aspirations, such as the library being accommodated with the Burton building.

A lengthy discussion took place about the reporting section of the agreement and the Senior Solicitor pointed out that the format was consistent with other outside bodies. Mrs Gentry stated that commercial sensitivity had to be considered, although all Councillors were invited to the AGM where commercial figures would be shared. She elaborated on some of the figures presented confirming that fundraising had increased by 25%; shop sales were down 11% and the footfall was up by 20% over the previous year.

It was noted that, when renewing the agreement at the end of its term, consideration should be given to the use of wording which reflected current phraseology.

Questions were asked about the future funding of the Burton after the expiration of the agreement in 5 years, to which Mrs Gentry responded that there had been no
discussion about self sufficiency at the time the agreement was drawn up. However, the Charity was working towards securing external funding.

The Committee expressed the need for figures with which they could work, i.e. £value rather than %value, in order that they could make decisions for longer term funding. Mrs Gentry confirmed she would take the request back to the Board. Any figures brought back would not be discussed in the public domain in accordance with Section 100(a) (4) of the Local Government Act (as amended). Torridge District Council had a duty to scrutinise organisations it funded.

Mrs Gentry commented that a quarterly report was sent to the Head of Paid Service, the Leader of the Council and the Commercial & Leisure Services Manager. Committee Members were not aware of the report. It was agreed that the Commercial & Leisure Services Manager circulate the report and that this be evaluated by Committee Members as it may provide answers to the questions being raised.

It was proposed by Councillor Langmead and seconded by Councillor Le Maistre –

That: Mrs Gentry approach the Charity’s Board with regard to providing £values rather than %values.

(Vote: For 9, Abstentions 1)

The Chair thanked Mrs Gentry. Mrs Gentry and Councillor Hurley left the meeting.

9. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Lead Member for Health & Well Being relayed apologies from the Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager and delivered an update on her behalf. A copy of the report would be circulated to Committee Members post meeting.

The effectiveness of the CSP and the working plan were discussed and it was noted that there was a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to work together with authorities including the Police, the Fire Service, the Health Service and other local partners to reduce reoffending; tackle crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse and any other behaviour which had a negative effect on the local environment.

The Lead Member for Health & Well Being raised awareness of modern slavery happening locally and enlightened the Committee as to the practice of “cuckooing” which targeted local vulnerable people and forced them to provide network hubs for drug dealing.

The purpose of the report was to make Committee Members aware of the problems and the process which could be followed and to offer reassurance.
10. **HEALTH, WELLBEING & SOCIAL CARE (STANDING ITEM)**

The Lead Member for Health & Well Being clarified the withdrawal of the motion at the AGM on 15 May. The main issue was to do with purdah, although it was confirmed that Alison Diamond was looking to set up a meeting with all interested parties in the near future. It was important that all interested parties work together.

This item prompted a request that the meeting with North Devon to discuss the Health Service plans be set as soon after 8 June as possible.

11. **CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was considered and updated to include:

- **Highways** – e-mail to be sent to all Councillors inviting them to send in any questions.
- **Education** – specific interest in the impact of Route 39. Informed Education expert to be invited.
- **Social Care**.

Impact Evaluation - The Senior Solicitor, in conjunction with the Commercial & Leisure Services Manager and Democratic Services, will implement the first 4 action points of the recommendations.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 4.18 pm.