

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Monday, 26 November 2018 - 10.00 am

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

ALSO PRESENT J Wallace - Head of Paid Service
 S Hearse - Strategic Manager (Resources)
 S Dorey - Senior Solicitor
 S Kearney - Planning & Economy Manager
 S Toon - Customer Support Manager
 S Cawsey - Democratic Services Officer

Councillors A Inch, K James and J Langton-Lockton

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Whittaker, D Brenton and K Davis.

61. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
 HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2018

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor P Hackett and -

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018 be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 8, Abstentions 3)

62. ACTION LIST

Minute 47 – Gypsy & Travellers

The Head of Paid Service updated the meeting on the availability of the laybys on the A39 for potential Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Leader of Devon County Council, Councillor Hart, had advised that the laybys will not be available as potential sites, and will be used once the improvement works to the Link Road starts. It is also an unsuitable site due to their location being on a fast road.

The Head of Paid Service addressed all concerns raised and reminded Members of the legal duty the Council had to provide appropriate transit and permanent site(s), and that in the absence of such sites the Authority had limited legal powers and the gypsies and travellers could not be moved on immediately on arrival.

The Strategic Manager (Resources) gave reasons as to why a potential site in the Bideford area would be more appropriate. This followed suggestions by Members for sites outside the Bideford area.

Minute 57 – S215 Notices

The Planning and Economy Manager confirmed there is no direct link between S215 Notices and Neighbourhood Plans.

63. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

64. FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Morrish referred to the meeting scheduled for 14 January 2019 and the Westward Ho! park items. He asked that his comments at this meeting be minuted - that in a meeting of this Committee Councillor Laws had promised Members that if the Park matters failed at the last meeting, he would not bring it back again.

The Head of Paid Service reported that Northam Town Council are approving a draft Business Plan, and a document had been submitted for consideration by Torrington District Council.

The Forward Plan was noted.

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

66. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

It was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved:

That the Agenda as circulated by agreed.

(Vote: For 10, Abstentions 1)

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

68. LITTER AND FLY TIPPING ENFORCEMENT

In the absence of the Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager, the Head of Paid Service presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider increasing the fixed penalty levels for littering and fly tipping offences.

Councillor K James, Lead Member for the Environment, addressed the meeting, and advised on the option put forward by the Government regarding increasing fixed penalty levels for littering and fly tipping offences. Clarification was also given on the Littering from Vehicles Regulations 2018 which had now been introduced.

Legal advice was given by the Solicitor following an enquiry with regard to CCTV cameras being installed, particularly in fly tipping hot spots, and webcams in vehicles.

Following a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Lock, seconded by Councillor Hackett and –

Resolved:

That the fixed penalty for littering and fly tipping, together with the discounts for early payment, as detailed in the report, be approved.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

69. ADOPTION OF A CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

In the absence of the Environmental Health & Community Safety Manager, the Head of Paid Service presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval from Members to commence a consultation on a Corporate Enforcement Policy which is intended to provide a framework for the way that the Council undertakes its regulatory functions.

It was proposed by Councillor Hicks, seconded by Councillor Dart and -

Resolved:

That the commencement of a public consultation on a Corporate Enforcement Policy for TDC be approved.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

70. ANNUAL PARKING REVIEW

The Planning and Economy Manager gave an overview of the report, referring in particular to the income and expenditure for parking operations for the period 2017/18, the charging proposals agreed by the Car Parking Working Group for presentation at this meeting and the detailed recommendations.

During the discussions that followed Councillor Christie requested that when preparing a press release details are given of where the income received is to be spent. The Planning and Economy Manager agreed with this action.

The Committee also discussed and put forward the following amendments to the recommendations:

That recommendation 1 - Permits - be reworded to omit £5 admin fee

Recommendation 3 – Payment Methods – That an additional two car parks are included, namely Manor car park Holsworthy and Sydney House car park Gt Torrington.

A vote was taken on each of the recommendations separately, subject to the amendments above.

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

Resolved:

Recommendation 1: Permits

- That the reserved bay charges be increased from £447 to £500
- That the double reserved bay charges (Willet St only) from £693 to £775

(Vote: For – Unanimously)

Recommendation 2:

That additional Free Parking from 12 noon Saturday until 6pm Sunday on Barley Grove car park, Well Park car park and Riverbank Short Stay car park be refused.

(Vote: For – Unanimously)

Recommendation 3:

That the installation of new doors to the existing pay and display machines on the 5 short stay car parks identified in the report and an additional two being Manor car park, Holsworthy and Sydney House car park in Gt Torrington, to allow for card and contactless payment be approved. The minimum transaction to be £3.00 to encourage longer stays in the town and to help to cover additional transaction costs.

(Vote: For – Unanimously)

71. NORTHERN DEVON TOURISM STRATEGY

The Planning and Economy Manager presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to adopt the Northern Devon Tourism Strategy 2018 – 2022.

It was proposed by Councillor Wiseman, seconded by Councillor Dart and -

Resolved:

That the Northern Devon Tourism Strategy 2018 -2022 for use by the Council as a guiding document for developing the tourism industry of the District and wider Northern Devon be adopted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

72. TRANSFORMING TORRIDGE PROGRAMME

The Head of Paid Service gave the following update:

The new Customer Hub had been opened by the Chair, Councillor Simon Inch, on Tuesday 20 November. The feedback received had been positive.

All staff are now located on a single site at Riverbank. Officers are looking at the Programme going forward :

- Locality - the Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager to review (further discussions to be held with Members on how they see it working)
- Digital - the Finance Team are working on this matter.

73. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Dart, seconded by Councillor Hicks 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)

74. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

75. NON-RECOVERABLE DEBTS

The report, the purpose of which was for Member approval to Write-Off debts that to date had been non-recoverable, was presented by the Customer Support Manager.

Members were reminded of the decision made at the previous meeting to defer this item. An update was given on the actions taken since that meeting.

A lengthy debate followed when it became apparent that some Members were reluctant to write-off the debts. Legal and financial advice was given by the Solicitor, the Head of Paid Service and the Strategic Manager (Resources).

Following concerns raised by Members, the Customer Support Manager detailed the legal processes and recovery actions that had been undertaken by Officers.

It was proposed by Councillor Morrish, seconded by Councillor McGeough that the debts not be written off.

An amendment to the recommendation was put forward that if the debts are written-off for technical accountancy purposes, the matter is included on the Forward Plan and reported back to this Committee on a regular basis.

A vote was taken on the proposal by Councillor Morris, seconded by Councillor McGeough not to write-off the debts.

(Vote: For 2, Against 9)

This motion was lost.

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

Resolved:

That the debts detailed in the report be written off for technical accountancy purposes, but remains subject to recovery action, with reporting back to this Committee on a regular basis.

(Vote: For 9, Against 2)

It was proposed by Councillor S Inch, seconded by Councillor Hicks that the press and public be re-admitted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

The meeting commenced at 10am and closed at 12.10pm

Chair:

Date: