

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Tuesday, 27 August 2019 - 10.00 am

PRESENT                      Councillor R Hicks (Chair)  
Councillors D Brenton, C Bright, D Bushby, P Christie, A Dart,  
K James, N Laws and R Lock

ALSO PRESENT              J Wallace                      - Head of Paid Service  
S Hearse                      - Strategic Manager (Resources)  
S Cawsey                      - Democratic Services Officer  
H Bond                        - Estates Manager  
C Fuller                        - Economic Development Officer

Councillors P Hackett, P Hames, T Inch, P Pennington, P Watson  
and M Clarke

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

19.     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Senior Solicitor and Councillor Wiseman - subsequent to the start of the meeting an email had been received giving his apologies

20.     MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 15 JULY 2019

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

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

Matters Arising:

Minute No. 13 – Forward Plan

Councillor Lock asked if any progress had been made regarding the proposed alteration to the Covenants on the Hotel Site, Westward Ho!

The Head of Paid Service had, prior to the meeting, spoken with the Ward Member who advised that the proposed purchaser for the site had withdrawn, and an

enquiry from the current owner had been received saying that he may now wish to put forward ideas. There are no definite ideas at this stage.

Minute No. 18 – S 106 monies

Following an enquiry from Councillor Christie, Councillor Dart advised that a list of S106 monies had been included in the Members Bulletin. She had sent an email to all Members to advise the list was in the Bulletin.

## 21. ACTION LIST

### Minute No. 18 – Contingency Reserves

Mooring Posts – The Strategic Manager (Resources) responded to an enquiry from Councillor Christie - Quotes had been received and instructions had been given for the posts to be installed. The works had been delayed whilst consideration was being given to an additional house boat owner who had requested a berth at Bank End. Councillor Bushby referred to the costs involved and was advised the total cost would be approximately £12,000. This matter had been approved by Full Council.

### Minute No. 18 – Play Strategy

Play Strategy –An update was given by the Head of Paid Service following an enquiry from Councillor Laws. She explained that to date no reference to the maintaining and replacing of play equipment had been found in the documents transferring the housing stock to Tarka Housing. Further checks will be made.

## 22. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

## 23. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

## 24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

## 25. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

It was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved: That the Agenda as circulated be agreed.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

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

The Head of Paid Service referred to the announcement made over the weekend by the Prime Minister, of an additional 50 towns, including Bideford and Barnstaple, to benefit from further funding.

The Authority had not previously been made aware of this development and the normal course of events would be to firstly receive a letter. At the present time Officers are unaware of the funding amount or whether it is an extension of the "Future High Streets Fund".

A letter, received the previous week, advising that the Authority had been unsuccessful in Round 1 of the Future High Streets Fund, also referred to the preparation for Round 2 and asked if Officers would be interested in working with a Mentor to improve the bid – the Authority responded accepting the offer.

As soon as further details as to the nature of the fund and the value etc. are received, it will be forwarded to Members. (An e-mail was received that afternoon and the Head of Paid Service sent out further details from that e-mail, but the amount of the award and conditions to be complied with are still awaited).

The Economic Development Officer gave brief details of the process that had been carried out when applying and submitting a bid for the Future High Streets Fund in Round 1 and the process for the next Round. It was confirmed that an Expression of Interest going forward had been submitted.

27. RECOMMENDATION FROM EXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CLOSURE OF TORRIDGE BRIDGE FOR EVENTS

The Head of Paid Service presented the report, the purpose of which was to present to Members the recommendation of External Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to the call-in of this Committees resolution of the 10 June 2019.

Councillor Pennington, Chair of External Overview & Scrutiny Committee, addressed the Committee and stressed the importance of not closing the Torridge Bridge. This he said would be putting social events before the health and wellbeing of the community.

Councillor Dart advised that at a meeting with Devon County Council they had confirmed there are no plans to close the Torridge Bridge.

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

Resolved:

That the following resolution of External Overview & Scrutiny Committee be upheld:

“That closure of the new bridge in facilitation of social events should not be supported”

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

28. UPDATE FROM CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP

The Head of Paid Service gave the following verbal update:

Arrangements had been made for an Officer and Member peer from the LGA to assist the Working Group with regard to updating the Constitution, and the first meeting had been scheduled for 2pm today at Riverbank House.

29. BIDEFORD TOWN HALL WORK HUB

A joint presentation of this report was given by the Strategic Manager (Resources) and the Economic Development Officer. The purpose of the report was for Members to consider changing the recommendation for the proposed Bideford Town Hall work hub and to cease investigations for the site.

When presenting this item, the significant potential benefits of a work hub in Bideford and the need for additional investigations to find a suitable site were highlighted.

This matter had been raised at a recent meeting of the Leadership Team for Members to consider the next course of action. It had been recommended that a report be brought back to this Committee outlining the changes in relation to costs.

The Economic Development Officer detailed the additional works required, all at a significant cost. He also reported that when the project went out to tender only one Contractor had submitted a bid, the implications of this meant there could be no negotiations on costs. The Town Hall was therefore deemed unsuitable, requiring further investigations to be conducted to identify an alternative site.

When debating this item it became evident Members were supportive of the project, and were in agreement that the Town Hall was not a financially viable site. The following points were raised:

- The uptake of a work hub – the benefits of a work hub for those working from home outlined by the Economic Development Manager included :
  - Living in isolation when working at home
  - There is evidence to indicate working together creates productivity
  - Business support from ND+ would be available
- Facility at Caddsdow – this is not an option, Caddsdow is normally 95% occupied and to change the IT infrastructure at this stage would be an

increase in costs. Other suggested sites included Bridge Buildings and the Library. The Head of Paid Service referred to Bridge Buildings and the advice received from four separate Agents, all had made it clear that there is no call for offices in this type of building, people are looking for more modern facilities. The Strategic Manager (Resources) reminded the Committee that Member recommendation for Bridge Buildings had been disposal.

- The hub to be available only at certain times – it was explained there is a need for flexibility for those wishing to use the hub.
- Projected costs to individuals and the need for a business to have a postal address – some hubs do offer a postal address service but was found to be a “logistical nightmare”. The initial costs when proposing the Town Hall site were given.
- To also look at life style and to the future.

It was proposed by Councillor Lock and seconded by Councillor Christie that an amendment be made to recommendation bullet point 2, to include that Bridge Buildings be investigated as an alternative site.

Following further discussion and confirmation that Bridge Buildings had previously been considered, Councillor Lock withdrew her proposal.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor James and -

Resolved:

- That the work hub in Bideford Town Hall not be delivered
- That additional investigations be conducted to identify an alternative site with the potential for an on-site Manager

(Vote: For 6, Abstentions 3)

### 30. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

### 31. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

32. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND STRATEGIC ASSET ACQUISITION

The Strategic Manager (Resources) presented to Committee a report seeking Member support for a Temporary Accommodation and Strategic Asset Acquisition.

During the discussion the Strategic Manager (Resources) addressed all questions and concerns raised by Members.

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Laws and -

Resolved:

That the acquisition of the property detailed in the report be approved.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Dart that the press and public be re-admitted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

The meeting commenced at 10am and closed at 11.13am

Chair:

Date: