

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILFULL COUNCIL MEETINGTown Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HSMonday, 1 July 2019 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT

Councillor D Brenton (Chair)
Councillor P Christie (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Boughton, C Bright, D Bushby, M Clarke, C Cottle-Hunkin, R Craigie, A Dart, L Ford, J Gubb, P Hackett, P Hames, S Harding, C Hawkins, R Hicks, C Hodson, J Hutchings, T Inch, K James, D Jones, S Langford, C Leather, R Lock, J Manley, D McGeough, J McKenzie, S Newton, P Pennington, G Rossi, and P Watson

ALSO PRESENT

S Dorey	- Senior Solicitor
J Wallace	- Head of Paid Service
S Hearse	- Strategic Manager (Resources)
C Norman	- Solicitor
S Cawsey	- Democratic Services Officer
M Richards	- Democratic Services Officer

Mr Harper – Non-elected Member

29 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown, Hepple, Hurley, Laws and Wiseman.

2. COUNCIL MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Inch and -

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(Vote: For 13, Abstentions 18)

Matters ArisingItem 78 (2) Written Notice of Motion from Councillor Whittaker

Councillor Hicks had asked for old minutes relating to the implications report process to be circulated. To date he had heard nothing.

The Head of Paid Service responded that the Notice of Motion had been referred to the Plans Committee and was on the agenda for the next meeting.

Officers had researched the history and in the past it had been used; then there had been a period where the process had not been used and then more recently it had been reintroduced.

The Head of Paid Service will ensure that any report will be made available to all Members.

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

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(Vote: For 30, Abstentions 1)

Matters Arising

Appointment to Programme Board

Councillor Christie asked whether there had been any progress on the setting up of a Member Asset Management Working Group.

The Leader of the Council advised that this was a priority issue which was being addressed and it was a matter of priority.

3. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Fiona Gibbon called for the Council to recognise climate emergency. She referred to the Government's plans to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 but stated that this was far too late, warning of the profound and potentially terminal consequences if we do not tackle the issue now. She urged all 3 tiers of Local Government to work together, to listen to and work with the experts

Mr Ian Godfrey of 361 Energy spoke of the work his organisation was carrying out in Torridge, promoting energy saving and renewable energy. They had worked with households in Torridge to address fuel poverty and had been involved in the installation of the solar panels at Pollyfield. Further sites had been identified in Bideford which would benefit from solar panels. Mr Godfrey appealed to the Council to adopt a climate emergency strategy for Bideford to be carbon neutral by 2030.

May Iris Corfe implored Members to "act today and declare a climate emergency".

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded Members that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

Councillor Inch declared an interest – dual hatted - Member of Devon County Council.

5. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

The Chair proposed that the report by the Head of Paid Service on Climate Emergency and the Notice of Motion brought by Councillors Christie, Hames and Hawkins be moved up the agenda.

(Vote: For 31, Against 1)

6. CLIMATE CHANGE

The Head of Paid Service briefed Members on the County wide activities following DCC's declaration of a "Climate Emergency". TDC had been working with DCC, other public bodies and the other Devon District Councils to agree to sign up to a Devon Climate Declaration. A number of meetings had already been held which the Head of Paid Service had dialled into.

It was noted that TDC already had a Carbon Management Programme in place. This now needed to be updated. Measures to reduce TDC's carbon footprint had included solar panels on the roof at Riverbank House offices, the introduction of electric car charging points on various sites, energy efficiencies within TDC owned buildings and the improved Waste & Recycling service.

A substantial amount of money had been put forward by DCC and grant funding was being sought to assist the Devon authorities. Furthermore, a Project Manager will be made available to all to ensure a consistent approach.

The purpose of the report had been to advise Members of the Devon wide collaboration and to determine whether Members wished to sign up to the Devon Climate Declaration. Detail could then be discussed and a working group could be established.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton and seconded by Councillor Inch -

That:

The significant action that TDC has taken to date in reducing its own carbon footprint and the wider collaborative activities that TDC is involved in at the current time be noted.

(Vote: For 27, Abstentions 4)

Clarification was provided by the Head of Paid Service regarding the second recommendation in the report. This had been included as DCC was looking at a target date of 2050, rather than 2030 as required by the Notice of Motion. The target date was debated and particular reference was made to the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's warning that we have 12 years to limit climate change to avoid a catastrophe.

A further discussion took place around responsibilities and lifestyle changes.

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

Resolved:

That TDC declare its own "Climate Emergency" with a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 at the latest.

(Vote: For 24, Against 5, Abstentions 2)

- Members discussed and agreed amendments to recommendation 3 to include a caveat that TDC had signed up to a target date of 2030 and not DCC target of 2050 and that consideration be given to agriculture within the Devon County Declaration, and the Agricultural Industry be consulted. The Head of Paid Service will take this back to the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton and seconded by Councillor Christie and –

Resolved:

- That preparations be made to sign up to the Devon Climate Change Emergency (subject to formal approval) which will commit TDC to updating the Carbon Management Plan for Torridge with a caveat that TDC had signed up to a target date of 2030 and not DCC target of 2050. Consideration also be given to agriculture within the Devon County Declaration, and the Agricultural Industry be consulted.

(Vote: For 27, Against 3, Abstentions 1)

7. WRITTEN NOTICE OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLORS CHRISTIE, HAMES AND HAWKINS

Written Notice of Motion from Councillors Christie, Hames and Hawkins

That TDC declares a "Climate Emergency" and pledges to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030 as part of a Devon-wide carbon reduction plan being organised by Devon County Council. Additionally the Council will protect and promote biodiversity throughout Torridge as part of this. Six monthly reports on progress achieved to be presented to Full Council from December 2019.

Councillor Christie presented the Notice of Motion.

It was suggested that the Notice of Motion should be considered in 2 parts as no information had been provided relating to biodiversity.

Councillor Hames, Lead Member for Climate Change, shared some of the main points from a statement he had prepared on climate change and biodiversity loss in the UK. A drastic decline in biodiversity had been experienced in the UK since the Second World War and the UK had one of the worst records of biodiversity loss in the world:

- 60% decrease in the number of birds
- A decline in insect populations
- A 70% decline in butterfly numbers and 2/3 decline in moth species
- Habitat loss - 75,000 miles of hedges had disappeared
- Farming practices, use of pesticides, housing and other development, road building were influencing factors, alongside climate change

The Lead Member confirmed that action to promote biodiversity was incredibly important in the face of climate change. Local authorities could work with building regulations and planning systems and specify more rigorous energy conservation requirements and biodiversity related to housing and other developments.

It was proposed by Councillor Craigie and seconded by Councillor Rossi –

That the Motion be amended to:

That TDC declare a “Climate Emergency” and pledge to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030 as part of a Devon-wide carbon reduction plan being organised by Devon County Council **and that a working group be set up and reporting commence with immediate effect.** Additionally the Council will protect and promote biodiversity throughout Torridge as part of this. Six monthly reports on progress achieved to be presented to Full Council from December 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor McGeough -

That:

The part of the Motion relating to biodiversity be considered separately.
It was proposed by Councillor James and seconded by Councillor Hutchings –

That:

TDC declares a “Climate Emergency” and pledges to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030 as part of a Devon-wide carbon reduction plan being organised by Devon County Council.

A decision on biodiversity throughout Torridge be deferred until a programme could be put forward.

Councillor Christie agreed to amend the Motion as above.

A vote was taken on the proposal by Councillor Craigie and seconded by Councillor Rossi –

That the Motion be amended to:

That TDC declare a “Climate Emergency” and pledge to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030 as part of a Devon-wide carbon reduction plan being organised by Devon County Council and that a working group be set up and reporting commence with immediate effect. Additionally the Council will protect and promote biodiversity throughout Torridge as part of this.

(Vote: For 28, Against 3)

The motion was carried.

A vote was taken on the proposal by Councillor James and seconded by Councillor Hutchings –

That:

TDC declare a “Climate Emergency” and pledge to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030 as part of a Devon-wide carbon reduction plan being organised by Devon County Council.

A decision on biodiversity throughout Torridge be deferred until a programme could be put forward.

(Vote: For 22, Against 9)

8. TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE OR OTHER BUSINESS ESPECIALLY BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIR

The Chair advised of the proposed closure of Appledore Fire Station.

The Ward Members for Appledore spoke in more detail about the service, bespoke vehicles and previous closure proposals.

It was proposed by the Chair –

That:

The Council’s opposition to the proposed closure of Appledore Fire Station be ratified by the Community & Resources Committee and that the MP be copied in on the communication to the Fire Authority.

(Vote: For 26, Abstentions 5)

Councillor Pennington proposed that Councillor Eastman of DCC be invited to a future meeting to speak on the matter.

9. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE A9

There were no questions submitted under Procedural Rule A9.

10. LEAD MEMBERS

Councillor James presented the report.

Councillor Hutchings declared an interest as he is a trustee of one of the bodies.

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

Resolved:

That the Lead Members and Membership of outside Bodies be approved.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

11. WRITTEN NOTICE OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR FORDWritten Notice of Motion from Councillor L S Ford

That the constitution be amended so that any Councillor can only serve as the Chair of Plans for a maximum of four consecutive years. Any Councillor who has served as Chair of Plans for four years cannot do so again for a four year period.

Councillor Ford presented the Notice of Motion. During the debate which followed, consideration was given to:

- Training for Plans Committee
- Whether the Motion should apply to all committees

It was proposed by Councillor Ford and seconded by Councillor Manley –

That:

The Notice of Motion be referred to the Constitution Working Group.

(Vote: For 20, Against 9, Abstentions 2)

12. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.15 pm

Chair:

Date: