

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Tuesday, 15 September 2020 - 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor P Watson (Chair)  
Councillor P Hames (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Boughton, C Cottle-Hunkin, J Gubb, S Langford,  
C Leather, T Inch and S Newton

Mr S Dengate and Mr I Harper

ALSO PRESENT: S Dorey - Senior Solicitor & Monitoring Officer  
S Hearse - Chief Executive  
S Kearney - Planning & Economy Manager  
S Cawsey - Democratic Services Officer

Councillors: C Hodson, D Hurley, K James, N Laws and  
D McGeough

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Manley (Councillor Leather substituting) and Mr D Heyes, Finance Manager & Interim S151 Officer.

21. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

22. 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.

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

24. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

25. CALL-IN: TEMPORARY FREE CAR PARKING

The Planning and Economy Manager presented the report which detailed previous discussions that had taken place in relation to the Notice of Motion for free car parking submitted by Councillor McGeough.

The decision of Community & Resources Committee made on 17 August 2020, had been called-in by Councillor Watson for consideration by this Committee.

The decision of Community & Resources Committee was as set out below:

"That a two hours free parking at any time during the day in all car parks in Bideford, Holsworthy and Torrington Town centres for the months of October and November be agreed".

Councillor McGeough addressed the meeting and gave reasons as to why he had submitted a Notice of Motion for free parking.

At the request of Councillor Newton, Councillor Watson explained his reasons for calling-in the decision made by Community & Resources Committee.

During the debate and considering the needs of residents and local businesses, and the detrimental impact on the financial position of the Authority, the key points raised included:

Enforcement of two hours at any time of day in all car parks would be difficult to manage – recommended to be set times

The funding of free parking if approved. The Planning & Economy Manager referred to the options set out in the report which gave details of how lost income associated with the proposed free car parking might be funded. Councillor Cottle-Hunkin stated she would not support using the New Homes Bonus monies brought forward from 2019-20.

Councillor Leather proposed free parking between the hours of 4pm - 6pm in all car parks listed in the report for the months of October and November, and to be funded from a combination of Members Grants (outstanding Grants from last year) and the balance from the New Homes Bonus. The recommendation to be taken back to Community & Resources Committee. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Inch.

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin proposed 2 hours free parking at any time in Bridge Street car park, the Manor car park and the Quay in Bideford, Sydney House and Barley Grove car parks in Torrington and the Manor car park in Holsworthy to be funded from the capital programme. The Chief Executive explained why it would not be possible to include capital funding from the Government as part of the recommendation. The capital programme is already over committed, so to balance the programme Members would need to decide which projects to take out to fund this proposal. Therefore, funding from the programme would not be available for October. There was no seconder for this motion.

Councillor Newton proposed that the first hour is paid for and the second hour is free in all car parks listed on page 4 of the report for October and November, and to be funded from the balance of Member Grants and from the New Homes Bonus brought forward from 2019/20. This motion was seconded by Councillor Boughton.

Members debated the alternative proposals made.

The Planning & Economy Manager addressed all questions and concerns raised during the debate. He responded to comments made by Members who felt that the figures based on last year's income did not reflect a true financial loss to the Authority, and that due to Covid the figures would be much lower.

The Senior Solicitor advised that any decision made at this meeting to be reported back to Community & Resources Committee.

Arguments against the motion for free parking were put forward –

Shopping habits of people – many now shop online

No evidence to show that free car parking will increase the footfall within the towns. The Planning & Economy confirmed that two hours free parking had not previously been trialled, however free parking on the Pill had been trialled.

The financial loss to the Authority

Feedback from Councils who have trialled free parking - had not been successful.

A recorded vote was taken on the first proposal by Councillor Leather and seconded by Councillor Inch –

“free parking between the hours of 4pm - 6pm in all car parks listed in the report for the months of October and November and to be funded from a combination of Members Grants (outstanding Grants from last year) and the balance from the New Homes Bonus. The recommendation to be taken back to Community & Resources Committee”.

COMMITTEE MEMBER	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
CLLR BOUGHTON, R		X	
CLLR COTTLE-HUNKIN, C		X	
MR S DENGATE		X	
CLLR GUBB, J		X	
CLLR HAMES, P		X	
MR I HARPER	X		
CLLR INCH, A	X		

CLLR LANGFORD, S		X	
CLLR C LEATHER (sub)	X		
CLLR NEWTON, S		X	
CLLR WATSON, P			X

(Vote: For 3, Against 7, Abstentions 1)

The motion was lost.

A recorded vote was taken on the proposal by Councillor Newton and seconded by Councillor Boughton.

COMMITTEE MEMBER	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
CLLR BOUGHTON, R	X		
CLLR COTTLE-HUNKIN, C		X	
MR S DENGATE	X		
CLLR GUBB, J	X		
CLLR HAMES, P		X	
MR I HARPER	X		
CLLR INCH, A	X		
CLLR LANGFORD, S	X		
CLLR C LEATHER (sub)	X		
CLLR NEWTON, S	X		
CLLR WATSON, P	X		

(Vote: For 9, Against 2)

**RESOLVED:**

That the first hour is paid for and the second hour is free in all car parks listed on page 4 of the report for October and November, and to be funded from the balance of Member Grants and from the New Homes Bonus brought forward from 2019/20.

The meeting commenced at 2 pm and closed at 3.45pm.

Chair:

Date: