

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL (BUDGET SPECIAL) MEETING

Caddsdow Business Support Centre - Bideford

Monday, 21 February 2022 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT

Councillor C Leather (Chair)
 Councillors R Boughton, D Brenton, C Bright, R Clarke, C Cottle-Hunkin, R Craigie, J Gubb, P Hackett, P Hames, S Harding, C Hawkins, K Hepple, R Hicks, C Hodson, D Hurley, T Inch, K James, D Jones, S Langford, N Laws, R Lock, J Manley, J McKenzie, S Newton, P Pennington, P Watson, R Wiseman and C Woodhouse

Non-elected Member Louis Bach JP

ALSO PRESENT

S Hearse	- Chief Executive
S Dorey	- Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
S Kearney	- Head of Communities & Place
D Heyes	- Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer)
P Hudson	- Senior Capital Accountant
T Vanstone	- Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer
S Cawsey	- Democratic Services Officer

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the Chief Executive invited nominations to Chair the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Hodson that Councillor Leather be elected to Chair the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Langford, seconded by Councillor Craigie that Councillor Brenton be elected to Chair the meeting.

A vote was taken on the first motion to elect Councillor Leather.

(Vote: For 24, Against 5)

Resolved:

That Councillor Leather be elected.

304. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the Chief Executive invited nominations to Chair the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Hodson that Councillor Leather be elected to Chair the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Langford, seconded by Councillor Craigie that Councillor Brenton be elected to Chair the meeting.

A vote was taken on the first motion to elect Councillor Leather.

(Vote: For 24, Against 5)

Resolved:

That Councillor Leather be elected.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bushby, P Christie, M Brown, L Ford and A Dart.

305. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Robin Glover addressed the meeting and spoke in relation to the deterioration of the play area at Victoria Park. The park, he stated, is a real asset to the town and therefore it is essential that improvements to the facilities are made.

Mr Glover had formed a Victoria Park Community Group who were looking for joint funding and to work in partnership with others. There is a lack of equipment for people with additional needs – this is an issue the Group will be looking into.

Alison Bennett, t/a Kitch'n' Cupboard, spoke regarding renovation works to the Gt. Torrington Pannier Market building. She emphasised how important the building is to the town and how hard traders are working to get the town back on its feet. The market building is in need of repair, and she asked that Members give serious consideration to finance the rectifications that had been planned. There is a need for the building to be brought up to standard.

David Gibbons, Chair of the Trustees at Torrington Market Hall, also spoke in relation to the repairs to the Market Building. He mentioned how supportive TDC had been over the works to Market House and gave credit to Mike Berriman for his help with regard to ingress of water. Reference was made to the deteriorating condition of Market House and to the Bell Tower which he said is rapidly falling into despair. Market House is an important building, Grade II* Listed, and the condition of the building does not reflect well on the town. He referred to the guidance of Historic England and the legal position enforcing corrective works to be carried out.

The Chair informed Mr Gibbons his comments would be taken on board and given full consideration.

306. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

307. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There was no Part II items.

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

There were no matters brought forward.

309. BUDGET 2022 - 23, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2026/27

The Finance Manager & S151 Officer introduced the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider the recommendations from Community & Resources Committee on the 31 January 2022 as scrutinised by Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 8 February 2022, in relation to the draft budget 2022/23 and to approve a budget and level of Council Tax for 2022/23.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) indicates the possible extent of the budget and funding shortfall that the Council will face in the future. It is an aid in identifying the extent of service changes that the Council will need to make to achieve a balanced budget in each financial year up to 2026/27.

Members were informed of an adjustment to the slide presentation, namely that the 2022/23 “provisional” settlement from Central Government be amended to “Final” settlement.

The slide presentation, delivered by the Finance Manager & S151 Officer, highlighted the salient points in the report and the challenges faced by Torridge Council. Members were also provided with reasons and rationale to support the recommendations in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Hodson, seconded by Councillor Manley and –

Resolved:

a) That Torridge’s Band D Council Tax for 2022/23 be increased by £5 (2.90%) from £173.66 to £178.66 per year

a) That Torridge’s Net Revenue Budget 2022/23 be £7.609m

b) That the contributions to the Council’s reserves as outlined in paragraph 11.4 of the report be approved.

d) That a working group be established the membership to be agreed by Full Council to be tasked with reporting back to Community and Resources for options to bring the Council's finances back into balance.

A recorded vote was taken.

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
BOUGHTON, R	X		
BRENTON, D G	X		
BRIGHT, C	X		
CLARKE, R	X		
COTTLE-HUNKIN C	X		
CRAIGIE, R	X		
GUBB, J	X		
HACKETT, P J W	X		
HAMES, P	X		
HARDING, S	X		
HAWKINS, C	X		
HEPPLE, K	X		
HICKS, R H	X		
HODSON, C	X		
HURLEY, D	X		
INCH, A T	X		
JAMES, K J	X		
JONES, D	X		
LANGFORD, S	X		
LAWS, N	X		
LEATHER, C	X		
LOCK, R A	X		
McKENZIE, J	X		
MANLEY, J	X		
NEWTON, S	X		
PENNINGTON, P	X		
WATSON, P	X		
WISEMAN, R	X		
WOODHOUSE, C	X		

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

In addition to the above, Members noted the following:

- The Finance Manager & S151 Officer assurance of the robustness of the budget 2022/23 as set out in section 13 of the report.
- The assumptions and forecast applied to develop the MTFs outlined in Section 8 of the report.
- The risks associated with the budget 2022/23 and MTFs outlined in Section 12 of the report.

310. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2022/23

The purpose of the report, presented by the Finance Manager & S151 Officer, was to enable Members to calculate and approve the Council Tax requirement for 2022/23.

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

Resolved:

That the formal Council Tax Resolution for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report be approved.

A recorded vote was taken.

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
BOUGHTON, R	X		
BRENTON, D G	X		
BRIGHT, C	X		
CLARKE, R	X		
COTTLE-HUNKIN C	X		
CRAIGIE, R	X		
GUBB, J	X		
HACKETT, P J W	X		
HAMES, P	X		
HARDING, S	X		
HAWKINS, C	X		
HEPPLE, K	X		
HICKS, R H	X		
HODSON, C	X		
HURLEY, D	X		
INCH, A T	X		

JAMES, K J	X		
JONES, D	X		
LANGFORD, S	X		
LAWS, N	X		
LEATHER, C	X		
LOCK, R A	X		
McKENZIE, J	X		
MANLEY, J	X		
NEWTON, S	X		
PENNINGTON, P	X		
WATSON, P	X		
WISEMAN, R	X		
WOODHOUSE, C	X		

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

311. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2026/27

The Deputy S151 Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider, formulate and recommend updates to the Capital Programme 2022/23.

The Capital Programme includes authorised projects which require updating due to inflationary pressures, along with new PIDs (Project Initiation Documents) which require authorisation from Members before inclusion.

A detailed and informative slide presentation was given highlighting the salient points in the report.

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin read to the meeting a statement received from Deputy Mayor of Gt Torrington, Councillor Keeley Allin, who urged Members to give their support to the Pannier Market Gt. Torrington as a capital project for this year. She asked that the following be included in the project - renovation of the frontage of the Pannier Market, any cosmetic works inside the Pannier Market and work to the Market House.

Councillor Laws raised a concern in relation to the costs towards the linear defence works at Westward Ho! and asked whether Central Government should accept a bigger responsibility towards this. Members were advised that Officers will be working with the Environment Agency on a scheme and will be looking to get as much funding towards this as possible.

Councillor Hodson who is working with the LGA Special Interest Group on coastal issues, spoke on issues highlighted within the Group and confirmed discussions will continue with the appropriate Agencies.

It was proposed by Councillor Hodson, seconded by Councillor Newton that the recommendations stated in the report be approved.

A debate then followed during which Members suggested the following changes to the list of recommended PIDs for inclusion in the capital programme:

C200 – Caddstown Disabled Access Pathways and C204 – Sandymere Road to be deleted to release up monies for more urgent items, namely Gt. Torrington Pannier Market and Victoria Park.

Officers explained why Caddstown Pathways was considered to be a priority – to ensure compliancy (at present do not have adequate disabled parking) and to leave would have an effect on Insurance.

Members were reminded that those PIDs that fall below the project score of 65 will be referred back to Officers for further work/refinement and possible future consideration.

Councillor Newton, as a member of the Working Group who had revised the scoring system for the PIDs to ensure the quality and robustness of the projects approved, addressed the meeting, and explained why he was opposed to changes being made.

It was proposed by Councillor Craigie, seconded by Councillor Hames that Caddstown Disabled Access Pathways be removed and Victoria Park to be included.

(Vote: For 5, Against 22, Abstentions 2)

The motion was lost.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Cottle-Hunkin that both Caddstown Disabled Access Pathways and Sandymere Road be removed and Gt Torrington Pannier Market and Victoria Park be included.

(Vote: For 7, Against 22)

The motion was lost.

A vote was then taken on the substantive motion to accept the recommendations in the report which had been proposed by Councillor Hodson, seconded by Councillor Newton and –

Resolved:

- c) That the Capital Programme be updated for building cost inflation
- d) That the Vehicle Programme be updated for inflation

- e) That the Vehicle Programme is Balanced long term, by increasing the contributions from revenue.
- f) That the following PIDs that met the minimum recommended project score of 65, be included in the Capital Programme:
- C202 Core Server
 - C200 Caddsdwn Disabled Access Pathways
 - C199 Revs & Bens Digitisation
 - C204 Sandymere Road

With the PIDs that fall below this score being referred back to officers for further work/refinement, and possible future consideration.

(Vote: For 22, Against 7)

The motion was carried.

312. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

This item was introduced by the Deputy S151 Officer who explained that the purpose of the report was for Members to consider the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2020/21.

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Manley and –

Resolved:

- That the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy and Counterparty List, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be approved.
- That the Capital Strategy be approved.

(Vote: For 28, Abstentions 1)

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.10pm.