

327. ACTION LIST

The Action List was reviewed and updated.

Minute 281 – Skateboard Park

Councillor James suggested this item be taken off the action list. Councillor Christie gave an update – he had spoken to the complainant and was advised it had again gone to the Ombudsman and there would be a legal case which is likely to involve costs. As this could be a budget issue, it was agreed the item be kept on the action list.

The Head of Communities & Place referred to the issues previously raised by the Ombudsman and confirmed these had now been dealt with.

328. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

329. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

330. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

331. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

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

Resolved: That the Agenda as circulated be agreed.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

333. NOTICE OF MOTION - DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATE RELIEF PARISH HALLS

The purpose of the report was for Members to recommend to Full Council what course of action the Council should take in light of the decision of Full Council on 20 February 2023 to support the Notice of Motion from Councillor Dart to reverse the decision to remove discretionary business rate support from Parish Halls.

The Section 151 Officer gave a slide presentation which outlined the salient points within the report.

Councillor Dart addressed the meeting, outlining her reasons and concerns as to why the decision to remove the discretionary business rate support for village halls should be reversed.

Councillor Dart commented on the underspend of Councillor Grants over the past years and suggested that Grants be reduced by £444 per Councillor and the monies be put back into the communities via village halls. It became evident during the discussion of this item that Members disagreed with the comments and the suggestion. The Head of Communities & Place confirmed there had been an underspend each year, generally more from the rural and not the urban areas. The rules had been changed to allow for charitable donations.

During further discussion Members considered the increase to pay 20% should the grant funding be removed for next year. The Section 151 Officer advised that if changes are required to the Discretionary Policy from 2024, letters to all will need to be sent before April 2023. It was suggested this to be included as an amendment to the recommendation.

Councillor Brenton suggested that in future years Parish Councils increase their Precepts to cover the cost of village halls.

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

Resolved:

- That the Notice of Motion from Full Council be rejected and the removal of the discretionary rate relief for Parish Halls is not reinstated.
- In line with statutory regulations pertaining to discretionary business rate relief, the Council will prior to the 1st April 2023 communicate to all affected business rate customers, its intention to potentially review its current discretionary business rates policy from the 1st April 2024.

(Vote: For 9, Against 2)

334. BIDEFORD REGENERATION STRATEGY

The Economic Development Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was:

- 1) To update Members on the status of the Bideford Regeneration Board
- 2) To adopt the Bideford Regeneration Strategy

A detailed and informative slide presentation was given which outlined the key elements of the report.

During the discussion the consensus was there is a need for future regeneration of the town and an uplift to the Quayside including the removal of cars parking there.

Councillor Christie emphasised the need for action to be taken on this occasion.

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

Resolved:

That the Bideford Regeneration Strategy be adopted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

335. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

Resolved:

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information by virtue of paragraph 2 of Part I and paragraph 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

336. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

337. NON-RECOVERABLE DEBTS

The Head of Legal and Governance (& Monitoring Officer) presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to decide on the non-recoverable debts.

During the discussion it was noted the figure noted in the recommendation was incorrect and the figure in Part 1 of the report was correct. It was agreed to delete the relevant wording in the recommendation.

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

Resolved:

That the recommendation to write off the debts listed in Part 1 of the report be approved.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED)

It was proposed by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Bright and –

Resolved: That the press and public be readmitted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

The meeting commenced at 6pm and closed at 7.26pm.