

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILCOMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETINGTown Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HSMonday, 23 October 2023 - 10.00 am

PRESENT Councillor R Hicks (Chair)
 Councillors D Brenton, L Bright, P Christie, P Hames, K James,
 C Leather, R Lock, L Piper, J Whittaker and P Pennington
 (substitute for A Dart)

ALSO PRESENT S Hearse - Chief Executive
 S Kearney - Head of Communities & Place
 G Bryant - Finance Manager (S151 Officer)
 C Fuller - Economic Development Officer
 J Wynne - Estates Manager
 A Avery - Community Engagement Officer
 S Cawsey - Democratic Services Officer
 K Brown - Democratic Services Officer

Councillor L Bach

360. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dart (Councillor Pennington substituting) and Staci Dorey, Head of Legal & Governance (& Monitoring Officer).

361. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

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

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 9, Abstentions 2)

Matters Arising:

Minute 356 – Urgent Matters

Councillor D Brenton expressed the opinion that to stop the Members Bulletin in its current format was not a decision that should have been made by Leadership Team, but a decision for Full Council to make. The Chief Executive explained Members had commented that by receiving the Bulletin at the end of the week,

information was being received too late. By using the alternative system information is shared to Members in a timely manner.

Councillor Brenton proposed this matter be discussed at a meeting of Group Leaders, following which to then present at Full Council for a decision by Members on which system they prefer.

362. ACTION LIST

It was noted that the Action List had not been attached to the Agenda.

363. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

364. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

365. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

366. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

Councillor Brenton did not agree with the Agenda as circulated, stating that the Part II item should be moved into Part I. A discussion then ensued during which Officers explained the reasons for including the item in Part II and the next steps should Members vote to move the item into Part I.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Pennington that the Part II item be moved into Part I.

(Vote: For 3, Against 8) The motion was lost.

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

Resolved: That the Agenda as circulated be agreed.

(Vote: For 8, Against 3)

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

368. DELIVERY OF THE BIDEFORD REGENERATION STRATEGY AND EMERGING GREAT TORRINGTON REGENERATION STRATEGY

The Economic Development Manager presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to approve £20,000 revenue funding from the Economic Development Project Reserve to support delivery of the Bideford Regeneration Strategy and the emerging Great Torrington Regeneration Strategy.

Councillor James, although in agreement with the recommendation, reiterated his concern that Holsworthy had not been mentioned. Councillor Piper endorsed the comments of Councillor James.

The main topics of discussion were:

- The need for regeneration of Bideford Town Centre
- The closure of shops in the ownership of national companies and the difficulties experienced in contacting those companies
- Local businesses opening and currently in Bideford
- An increase in delivery vans from online shopping
- To consider car parking in the regeneration proposals and to review the parking strategy

The Committee congratulated the Economic Development Manager on his report.

It was proposed by Councillor Whittaker, seconded by Councillor Leather and

Resolved:

- That the £10,000 revenue funding from the Economic Development Project Reserve to be used for the delivery of the Bideford Regeneration Strategy be approved.
- That the £10,000 revenue funding from the Economic Development Project Reserve to be used for the delivery of the emerging Great Torrington Regeneration Strategy be approved.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

369. INSTALLATION OF DRINKING WATER FOUNTAINS AT VICTORIA PARK, BIDEFORD AND WESTWARD HO!

The purpose of the report was for Members to consider the benefit/cost of installing drinking water fountains on TDC land, aimed at reducing single-use plastic bottle consumption.

The Estates Manager presented a summary of the report, highlighting the key salient points.

Councillor Hames as Lead Member for Climate Change addressed the Committee explaining the background to the recommendation and proposing that the

recommendation includes – “to actively investigate installation of fountains on Torridge Buildings and to report back to this Committee”.

Councillor Piper put forward an amendment to Councillor Hames recommendation to include – “look at all possibilities and not just Torridge buildings”.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Hames, seconded by Councillor Brenton and -

Resolved:

That this Council actively investigate the installation of water fountains on selected Torridge Buildings, reporting back to Community & Resources Committee with full information, costings and possible funding opportunities.

(Vote: For 9, Against 2)

370. PURCHASE OF TRACTOR

The Head of Communities & Place presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Member approval for the purchase of a tractor for use by the Burrows Service and Grounds Maintenance Teams.

The comments/concerns raised during the discussion included:

- Consideration of electric tractor – the response was that the Head Ranger had investigated all options and currently the best option is diesel.
- Storage of the tractor to be at Victoria Park and not at the Burrows.
- Leasing of a tractor – the Head of Communities & Place stated that leasing is ongoing whereas the funds are available to purchase.
- There was debate around the Stewardship Scheme and what the funds could be used for.

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

Resolved:

That a recommendation be made to Full Council that the capital programme be increased by £55k and that the tractor and implements be purchased for the reasons outlined in the report.

(Vote: For 10, Against 1)

371. VICTORIA PARK PLAY AREA

Prior to the presentation Councillor Christie declared a personal interest – Trustee of Bideford Bridge Trust.

The Community Projects Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider TDC Officers using TDC Play Area Funds to make improvements to Victoria Park Play area in addition to secured external funding.

Councillor Piper, Lead Member for Leisure, commended the Community Projects Officer and Team for their due diligence and hard work on such a large project.

It was confirmed that due to timescales, the opening for this project would be Easter 2024.

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

Resolved:

That approval be given to TDC Officers to use available capital funds allocated for play spaces at Victoria Park Play Area.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

372. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Lock 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 1 and paragraph 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

373. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

374. BIDEFORD TOWN HALL BUILDING

The purpose of the report, presented by the Estates Manager, was for Members to give consideration of future uses within Bideford Town Hall/Library Building.

When presenting the report, the Estates Manager referred in particular to the recommendations in the report in terms of how to move forward.

During the lengthy discussion that followed, Officers reiterated their previous comments as to why the report was in Part II and advised that a full future public consultation will be undertaken.

Members also discussed an amendment to the recommendation.

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

Resolved:

That Officers consider the longer-term future use of the Bideford Town Hall and Library buildings, including consulting with the Public and wider stakeholders, whilst preparing options for the short term use of the buildings.

(Vote: for – Unanimous)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED)

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

Resolved:

That the press and public be readmitted.

(Vote: For 10, Against 1)

The meeting commenced at 10am and closed at 12.07